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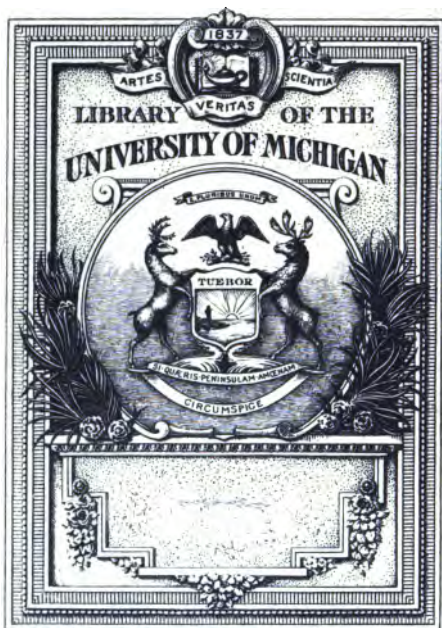
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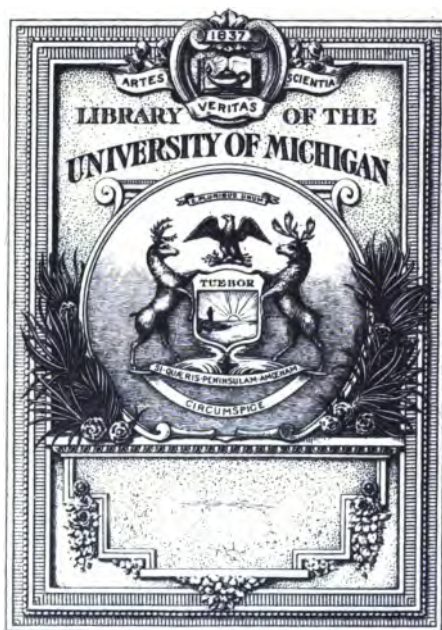




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THE
HEROINE,

OR
ADVENTURES

OF A
FAIR ROMANCE READER,

BY
EATON STANNARD BARRETT, ESQ.

"L'Histoire d'une femme est toujours un Roman."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1813.

B. CLARKE, Printer, Well-street, London.

THE END

THE END
OF THE
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This morning, just as I had finished reading the closet-scene, in the Children of the Abbey, I heard the landlady come into the room in a short time. I was surprised of their manner, and was wondering that I would not have

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THE HEROINE.

LETTER XVIII.

AT dinner, yesterday, I bespoke his lordship as an escort to the masquerade; and we then held a council of dress. It was resolved, that I should appear in the character of Sterne's Maria, and his lordship as Corporal Trim.

This morning, just as I had finished reading the closet-scene, in the Children of the Abbey, Betterton and the landlady came into my room; and in a short time, I perceived the purport of their visit; as they began requesting that I would not take either Stuart

or Montmorenci with me to the masquerade.

“ The fact is, Miss,” said the landlady, “ that I have heard your real story. Mr. Grundy is not your cousin at all, and your name is Wilkinson, not Donald. Howsomever, as I believe you meant no harm, in this deception, I am willing, at the solicitations of this excellent gentleman, to let you remain in my house, provided you promise not to receive any more visits from that Stuart, who is the greatest villain unchanged; or from Mr. Grundy, who has certainly bad designs on you; though he made proposals of marriage to myself, no longer ago than yesterday.”

A tapping at my door prevented me from expressing my total disbelief in her latter assertion. It struck me that should the person prove to be his lord-

THE HEROINE.

ship, I might make her look extremely foolish, by letting her overhear his declarations of attachment to me.

"Conceal yourselves in this closet," whispered I to my visitors. "I have particular reasons." They looked at each other, and hesitated.

"In, in !" said I ; " for I suspect that this visit is from a villain, and I wish you to hear what passes."

Both then went into the closet. I opened the door of my chamber, and, to my great disappointment, the poet appeared at it, with his eyes rolling, and his mouth ajar.

"What is the matter ?" asked I.

He gaped still wider, but said nothing.

"Ah," cried I, "that is an awkward attempt at expressing horror. If you have any hideous news to communicate, why do you not rush into

the room, tossing your hands on high, and exclaiming, ‘ Fly, fair lady, all is lost ! ’ ”

“ Indeed, Miss,” said he, “ I was never in the way of learning good-breeding. But don’t go to the masquerade, Miss, Oh, don’t ! My mother overheard old Betterton just now planning with the landlady, to carry you from it by force. But, Miss, I have a fine sword, above stairs, three feet and a half long, and I will rub off the rust, and ——— ”

A knock at the street-door interrupted him. I was in a hiding mood. Already the scene promised wonders ; and I resolved not to damp its rising spirit ; so made the simple Higginson get underneath the sofa.

The next moment my door opened, and Vixen, Montmorenci’s terrier, came bounding towards me.

“ Go, dear Vixen,” cried I, snatching her to my bosom; “ carry back to your master all that nourishes his remembrance. Go, dear Vixen, guard him by night, and accompany him by day, serve him with zeal, and love him with fidelity !”

I turned round, and perceived —— Montmorenci ! The poor timid girl bent her eyes to the ground.

“ Yes, dear Vixen,” said he, “ you have now indeed a claim to my regard ; and with the fondest gratitude will I cherish you !”

He then flew to me, and poured forth, at my feet, the most passionate acknowledgments, and tender protestations.

I tried to break from him.

“ No, loveliest Cherubina !” said he, detaining me. “ Not thus must we part.”

“ We must part for ever !” exclaimed I. “ After that rash soliloquy which you have just heard, never can I bear you in my sight. Besides, Sir, you are betrothed, at this moment, to another.”

“ I? Ridiculous! But to whom?”

“ Our hostess—a most charming woman.”

“ Our hostess! Yes, a charming woman indeed. She has roses in her cheek, and lilies in her skin; but they are white roses, and orange lilies. Our hostess! Beshrew my heart, I would let cobwebs grow on my lips before I would kiss her.”

Another knock came to the door.

“ Me miserable!” exclaimed I. “ If this be the person I suspect, we are both undone—separated for ever!”

“ Who? what? where shall I hide?” cried his lordship.

“ Yon dark closet,” said I, pointing. “ Fly.”

His lordship sprang into the closet, and closed the door.

“ I can hear no tidings of your father,” said Stuart, entering the room. “ I have searched every hotel in Town, and I really fear that some accident ——”

“ Mercy upon me ! who’s here ?” cried his lordship from the closet. “ As I hope to be saved, the place is full of people. Let me go ; whoever the devil you are, let me go !”

“ Take that—and that—and that : —you poor, pitiful, fortune-hunting play-actor !” vociferated the landlady, buffetting him about.

That unhappy young nobleman bolted from the closet, with his face running blood, and the landlady fast at his heels.

“ Yes, you dog !” exclaimed she ;
“ I have discovered your treacherous-
ness at last. As for your love-letters
and trinkets, to me, villain---I never
valued ’em a pin’s point ; but that you
should go for to try to ruin this sweet
innocent young creature, that is what
distresses me, so it is.” And she
burst out crying.

“ Love-letters and trinkets to you !”
exclaimed I. “ Surely he was not so
base, Madam.”

“ But he was so base, Madam,”
said she with a bitter look ; “ and if
you fancy that ’tis yourself he loves,
why look there ; read the letter he
sent me yesterday, just after I had
asked him to pay me for six month’s
diet and lodging.”

I read :

“ Accept, my lovely hostess, the
pair of bracelets which accompanies

this note, and rest assured that I will discharge my bill, in the course of another month.

“ My motive for having brought Miss Wilkinson into your house, as my cousin, was simply to restore her to her friends. Your jealousy, though most unfounded, is most flattering.

“ Ah, how little do you know your Grundy ! If I pay the silly girl a few slight attentions, it is only to cloak that tenderness for you, which preys upon my heart, and consumes my vitals ;—that tenderness, which I yesterday so solemnly vowed to evince (as soon as my affairs are arranged) at the altar.

“ Your own, own, own,

“ ABRAHAM GRUNDY.”

It was as much as my dignity could do to suppress my indignation at this letter ; but the heroine prevailed, and

I cast on his lordship my famous compound expression of pity, contempt, and surprise, which I tinged with just fascination enough to remind him of what a jewel he had lost.

Meantime he stood wiping his face, and did not utter a word.

“ And now,” cried I, “ now for the grand developement. James Higginson, come forth !”

In a moment the poet was seen, creeping, like a huge tortoise, from under the sofa.

“ Mr. Higginson,” said I, “ did not your mother tell you, that this lady here—this amiable lady,” (and I curtsied low to her, and she curtsied still lower to me), “ that this first and best of women,” (and again we exchanged rival curtsies), “ is plotting with a Mr. Betterton to betray me into his hands at the masquerade ?”

“Madam,” answered the poet, with a firm demeanour, “I do solemnly certify and asseverate, that so my mother told me.”

“Then your mother told a confounded falsehood!” cried Betterton, popping out of the closet.

Higginson walked up to him, and knocked him down with the greatest gravity imaginable. The hostess ran at Higginson, and fastened her fangs in his face. Montmorenci laid hold of the hostess, and off came her cap. Stuart dropped into a chair with laughter. I too forgot all my dignity, and clapped my hands, and danced with delight, while they kicked and scratched each other without mercy.

At length Stuart interfered, and separated the combatants. The landlady retired to repair her dismantled head; and his lordship and Higginson to

wash their wounds. Betterton too was about to take his departure.

“ Sir,” said Stuart, “ I must beg leave to detain you for a few moments.”

Betterton bowed and returned.

“ Your name is Betterton, I believe.”

“ It is, Sir,”

“ After Mr. Higginson’s accusation of you,” said Stuart, “ I feel myself called upon, as the friend of this lady’s father, to insist on your apologizing for the designs which you have dared to harbour against her; and to demand an unequivocal renunciation of those views for the future.”

“ You are an honest fellow,” said Betterton, “ and I respect your spirit. Most sincerely, most humbly, Miss Wilkinson, do I solicit your forgiveness; and I beg you will believe, that

nothing but a misrepresentation of your real character and history tempted me to treat you with such undeserved insult. I now declare, that you have nothing further to fear from me."

"But before I can feel perfectly satisfied," said Stuart, "I must stipulate for the discontinuance of your visits to Miss Wilkinson, as a proof that you have relinquished all improper projects against her."

"I had formed that resolution before you spoke," answered Betterton, "though many a bitter pang it will cost me. Now then we are all friends. I may have my faults, but upon my soul, I am a man of honour; —I am, upon my soul. As for you, Mr. Stuart, without flattery, you have evinced more discretion and coolness, throughout this affair, than I have ever seen in so young a man. Sir,

you are an honour to the human race, and I wish you would dine with me this evening at the Crown and Anchor. Some friends of us meet there to discuss a radical reform. Do, my dear fellow. We want nothing but men of respectability like you ; for our sentiments ' are the finest in the world.'

" You will excuse me," said Stuart, " though I am told that your wines are as fine and as foreign as your sentiments."

" Well, adieu, good people," said Betterton. " Think of me with kindness. Faults I may have, but my heart ——" (tapping at it with his forefinger), " all is right here."

After he had left us, I reprimanded Stuart so severely, for his officiousness in having interfered about Betterton, that he went away quite offended ; and, I much fear, will never return.

If he does not, he will use me basely, to leave me here in this unprotected state, after all his anxieties about me—anxieties too, which (I cannot tell why) have pleased me beyond expression. I confess, I feel a regard for the man, and should be sorry to have hurt his feelings seriously. Would Sir Charles Bingley have deserted me so, I ask? No. But Stuart has no notion of being a plain, useful, unsuccessful lover, like him. Well, I must say, I hate to see a man more ready to fall out with one, than to fall in love with one.

But Montmorenci—what shall I say of him? How can he possibly exculpate himself from his treacherous intrigue with the landlady? I confess I am predisposed to credit any feasible excuse which he can assign, rather than find myself deceived, outrivalled,

and deprived of a lover, not alone dear to me, but indispensable to the progress of my memoirs.

Then, that closet-scene, from which I had a right to expect the true pathetic, what a bear-garden it became! In short, I feel at this moment disgusted with the world. I half wish I were at home again. Now too, that Stuart has reminded me of our early days, I cannot avoid sometimes picturing to myself the familiar fireside, the walks, frolics, occupations of our childhood; and well I remember how he used to humour my whims. Oh, these times are past, and now he opposes me in every thing.

But whither am I wandering? Pardon these vulgar sentiments. They have escaped my pen. You know that a mere home is my horror. Forgive them. Adieu.

LETTER XIX.

DETERMINED to support my dignity, I dined alone in my room, after the closet-scene ; and during this evening, letters of the most heart-rending nature passed between his lordship and me.

To be brief, he has convinced me, that the letter written in his name, to the landlady, was a FORGERY of her own. The circumventing wretch ! I am of opinion, that it ought to be made a hanging matter.

The following is an extract from his and my correspondence. After a most satisfactory disquisition on the various circumstances tending to prove the forgery, he writes thus :

— — — —

“I have begun twenty letters to you, and have torn them all. I write to you on my knees, and the paper is blistered with my tears; but I have dried it with my sighs.

“Sun, moon, and stars may rise and set as they will. I know not whether it be day, or whether it be night.

“When the girl came with your last note, the idea that your eyes had just been dwelling on her features, on her cap, ribbon, and apron, made her and them so interesting, so dear to me, that, though her features are snubbed, her cap tattered, her ribbon bottle-green (which I hate), and her apron dirty, I should certainly have taken her in my arms, if I had not been the most bashful of men.

“Though that note stung me to the heart, the words were hosts of angels to me, and the small paper the inter-

minable regions of bliss. Any thing from you!

“How my heart beats, and my blood boils in my veins, when by chance our feet meet under the table. The diapason of my heart-strings vibrates to the touch. How often I call to mind the sweet reproof you once gave me at dinner, when I trod on your toe in a transport of passion.

“If you love me, tell me so,” said you, smiling; ‘but do not hurt my foot.’

“Another little incident is always recurring to me. As we parted from each other, the night before last, you held out your hand and said, ‘Good night, my dear Montmorenci.’ It was the first time you had ever called me *dear*. The sound sank deep into my heart. I have repeated it a hundred times since, and when I went to bed,

I said, good night, my dear Montmorenci. I recollected myself and laughed. The fatal kiss that I once dared to snatch from you has undone me for ever. The moisture on your lip was like a supuration of rubies. O immortal remembrance of that illusive, frantic, and enchanting moment!"

BILLET FROM CHERUBINA.

He who could be capable of the letter, could be capable of calling it a forgery.

BILLET FROM MONTMORENCI.

Misery with you, were better than happiness without you.

BILLET FROM CHERUBINA.

Hatred and certainty were better than love and suspicion.

BILLET FROM MONTMORENCI.

Love is heaven and heaven is love.

BILLET FROM CHERUBINA.

If heaven be love, I fear that heaven
is not eternal.

BILLET FROM MONTMORENCI.

If my mind be kept in suspense, my
body shall be suspended too.

BILLET FROM CHERUBINA.

Foolish youth! If my life be dear to
thee, attempt not thine own.

BILLET FROM MONTMORENCI.

It were easier to kill myself than to
fly from Cherubina.

BILLET FROM CHERUBINA.

LIVE. I restore you to favour.

BILLET FROM MONTMORENCI.

Angelic girl! But how can I live
without the means? My landlady
threatens me with an arrest. Heloise
lent money to St. Preux.

BILLET FROM CHERUBINA.

In enclosing to you half of all I have, I feel, alas! that I am but half as liberal of my purse as of my heart.

BILLET FROM MONTMORENCI.

I promise to pay Lady Cherubina de Willoughby, or order, on demand, the sum of twenty-five pounds sterling, value received.

MONTMORENCI.

In a few minutes after I had received this last billet, his lordship came in person to perfect the reconciliation. Never was so tender, so excruciating a scene.

We then consulted about the masquerade; and he brought me down his dress for it. The Montero cap and tarnished regimentals (which he procured at the theatre) are admirable.

Soon after his departure, a letter was brought to me by the maid; who said, that a tall man, wrapped in a dark cloak, put it into her hand, and then fled with great swiftness.

Conceive my sensations on reading this note, written in an antiquated hand.

To Lady Cherubina de Willoughby.

These, greeting.

Most fayre Ladie

An aunciente and lopall Vassall
that erewhyles appertained unto y^e
ryghte noble Ancestrie, in y^e qua-
litie of Beneschal, hath, by chaunce,
discobred y^e place of hiding, and
doth crabe y^e boon that you will
not fayle to goe unto y^e Masque-
rade at y^e Pantheon; where, anon
he will jopn you, and unravell di-

berg mysterps touching pour pedigreee.

Lette nonne disswaid pou from to goe, and eke lette nonne, save a Matron, goe with pou ; els I dare not holde parle with pou.

Myne honoured Ladie, if you heede not this counsell, you will work yourselfe woefull ruth.

Judge if I can sleep a wink after such a mysterious communication. Excellent old man ! I mean to make him my steward.

Adieu,

LETTER XX.

I BELIEVE I mentioned, in a former letter, that my bed-chamber was on the ground floor, and looking into the yard at the back of the house. Soon after I went to bed, last night, I heard a whispering and rustling outside of the window, and while I was awaiting with anxiety the result, sleep surprised me.

I awoke earlier, as I thought, than usual, this morning; for not a ray penetrated my curtainless window. I then tried to compose myself to sleep again, but in vain; so there I lay turning and tumbling about, for eight or nine hours, at the very least. At last I became alarmed. What can be the matter? thought I. Is the sun quench-

ed or eclipsed? or has the globe ceased rolling? or am I struck stone blind?

In the midst of my conjectures, a sudden cry of fire! fire! reverberated through the house. I sprang out of bed, and huddled on me whatever cloaths came to hand. I then groped for my casket of jewels, and having secured it, rushed into the outer room, where my eyes were instantly dazzled by the sudden glare of light.

However, I had presence of mind enough to snatch up Coporal Trim's coat, which still remained on a chair; and to slip it on me. For, in the first place, I had no gown underneath; and in the next, I recollected, that Harriot Byron, at a moment of distress, went wild about the country, in masquerade.

Hurrying into the hall, I saw the street door wide open, Stuart and

Montmorenci struggling with each other near it, the landlady dragging a trunk down stairs, and looking like the ghost of a mad housemaid; and the poet just behind her, with his corpulent mother, bed and all, upon his back; while she kept exclaiming, that we should all be in heaven in five minutes, and he crying out, Heaven forbid! Heaven forbid!

I darted past Stuart, just as he had got Montmorenci down; thence out of the house, and had fled twenty paces, before I discovered, that, so far from being night, it was broad, bright, incontrovertible day!

I had no time to reflect on this mystery, as I heard steps pursuing me, and my name called. I fled the faster, for I dreaded I knew not what. The portentous darkness of my room, the false alarm of fire, all betokened some dia-

bolical conspiracy against my life ; so I rushed along the street, to the horror and astonishment of all who saw me. For conceive me drest in a long-skirted, red coat, stiff with tarnished lace; a satin petticoat, satin shoes, no stockings, and my flaxen hair streaming like a meteor behind me!

Stop her, stop her! was now shouted on all sides. Hundreds seemed in pursuit. Panting and almost exhausted, I still continued my flight. They gained on me. What should I do? I saw the door of a carriage just opened, and two ladies, dressed for dinner, stepping into it. I sprang in after them, crying, save me, save me! The footman endeavoured to drag me out; the mob gathered round shouting; the horses took fright, and set off in full gallop; I, meantime, on one knee, with my meek eyes raised, and my hands

folded across my bosom, awaited my fate; while the ladies gazed on me in dismay, and supported one unbroken scream.

At last, the carriage dashed against a post, and was upset. Several persons ran forward, and, I being uppermost, took me out the first. Again I began running, and again a mob was at my heels. I felt certain they would tear me in pieces. My head became bewildered; and all the horrid sights I had ever read of rose in array before me. Bacchantes, animated with Orphean fury, slinging their serpents in the air, and uttering dithyrambics, appeared to surround me on every side. On I flew. Knock it down! cried several voices.

A footman was just entering a house. I rushed past him, and into a parlour, where a large party were sitting at dinner.

Save me!, exclaimed I, and sank on my knees before them. All arose:—some, in springing to seize me, fell; and others began dragging me away. I grasped the table-cloth, in my confusion, and the next instant, the whole dinner was strewn about the floor. Those who had fallen down, rose in piteous plight; one bathed in soup, another crowned with vegetables, and the face of a third all over harico.

They held me fast, and questioned me; then called me mad, and turned me into the street. The mob were still waiting for me there, and they cheered me as I came out; so seeing a shop at hand, I darted through it, and ran up stairs, into the drawing-room.

There I found a mother in the cruel act of whipping her child. Ever a victim to thrilling sensibility, I snatched the rod from her hand; she shrieked

and alarmed the house; and again I was turned out of doors. Again, my friend the mob received me with a shout; again I took to flight; rushed through another shop, was turned out—through another, was turned out. In short, I threaded a dozen different houses, and witnessed a dozen different domestic scenes. In this, they were singing, in that scolding:—here, I caught an old man kissing the maid, there, I found a young man reading the Bible. Entering another, I heard ladies laughing and dancing in the drawing-room. I hurried past them to the garrets, and saw their aged servant dying.

Shocked by the sight, I paused at his half-opened door. Not a soul was in the room with him; and vials and basons strewed the table.

“Is that my daughter?” said he

feebly. " Will no one go for my daughter? To desert me thus, after first breaking my heart! Well then, I will find her out myself."

He made a sudden effort to rise, but it was fatal. His head and arms dropped down motionless, and hung out of the bed. He gave a hollow sob, and expired.

Horrorstruck, I rushed into an adjoining garret, and burst into tears. I felt guilty of I knew not what; and the picture of Wilkinson, dying in the madhouse, and calling on his daughter, shot across me for a moment.

The noise of people searching the rooms below, and ascending the stairs, put an end to my disagreeable reflections; and I thought but of escape. Running to the window of the garret, I found that it opened upon the roof of a neighbouring house; and recol-

lecting that robbers often escape by similar means, I sprang out of the window, closed it after me, and ran along a whole row of roofs.

At last I came to a house higher than the rest, with a small window, similar to that by which I had just got out, and happily lying open. On looking into the garret, I found that nobody was there, so I scrambled into it, and fastened the window after me. A servant's bed, a chair, a table, and an immense chest, constituted all the furniture. The chest had nothing but a little linen in it; and I determined to make it my place of refuge, in case of an alarm.

Having sat a few minutes, to compose my spirits, after the shock they had just experienced, I resolved on exploring the several apartments; for I felt a secret presentiment that this

house was, some way or other, connected with my fate—a most natural idea.

I first traversed the garrets, but found nothing in them worthy of horror; so I stole, with cautious steps, down the first flight of stairs, and found the door of the front room open. Hearing no noise inside, I ventured to put in my head, and perceived a large table, with lighted candles on it, and covered over with half-finished dresses of various descriptions, besides bonnets, feathers, caps, and ribbons in profusion; whence I concluded that the people of the house were milliners.

Here I sat some time, admiring the dresses, and trying at a mirror how the caps became me, till I was interrupted by steps on the stairs. I ran behind a window-curtain; and immediately three young milliners came into the room.

They sat down at the table, and began working.

“ I wonder,” said one, “ whether our lodger has returned from dinner.”

“ What a sly eye the fellow casts at me,” says another.

“ And how he smiles at me,” says the first.”

“ And how he teases me about my being pretty,” says the second.

“ And me too,” says the first; “ and he presses my hand into the bargain.”

“ Presses !” says the second; “ why he *squeezes* mine ; and just think, he tries to kiss me too.”

“ I know,” says the third, who was the only pretty girl of the three, “ that he never lays a finger on me, nor speaks a word to me, good or bad—never : and yesterday he lent me the *Mysteries of Udolpho* with a very bad grace ; and when I told him that I

wanted it to copy the description of the Tuscan girl's dress, as a lady had ordered me to make up a dress like it, for the masquerade to-night, he handed me the book, and said, that if I went there myself, the people would take my face for a mask."

Judge of my horror, when I recollected, that this was, indeed, the night of the masquerade; and that I was pent behind a curtain, without even a dress for it!

That Tuscan costume, thought I, would just answer. Perhaps I could purchase it from the milliner. Perhaps—But in the midst of my perhaps's, the first and second milliner set off with some Indian robes, which they had finished for the masquerade, while the pretty one still remained to complete the Tuscan dress.

While I was just resolving to issue

from my retreat, and persuade her to sell me the dress, I heard a step stealing up the stairs; and presently perceived a young gentleman peeping into the room. He nodded familiarly to the milliner; and said, in a whisper, that he had seen her companions depart, and was now come to know how soon she would go, that he might meet her at their old corner. She replied, that she would soon be ready; and he then stole back again.

I had now no time to lose in accomplishing my plan, so I drew aside the curtain, and stood, in a commanding attitude before her.

The poor girl looked up; started, made a miserable imitation of the heroic scream, and ran down stairs.

I ran after her, as far as the landing-place; and on looking over the balusters, into the hall, I saw the young man who had just been with her, li-

tening to her account of the transaction. "I will call the watch," said she, "and do you keep guard at the door."

She then hastened into the street, and he stood in such a manner, that it was impossible for me to pass him.

"What is the matter?" cried the mistress of the house, coming out of the parlour.

"A mad woman that is above stairs," answered the young man. "Miss Jane has just seen her; dressed half like a man, half like a woman, and with hair down to the ground!"

"What is all this?" cried a maid, running out of the kitchen.

"Oh! Molly," said the mistress, "Miss Jane is just frightened to death by a monster above stairs, half man, half woman, and all over covered with hair!"

Another servant now made her appearance.

“ Oh ! Betty,” cried Molly, “ Miss Jane is just killed by a huge monster above stairs, half man, half beast, all over covered with black hair, and I don’t know what other devilments besides !”

“ I will run and drive it down,” cried Betty, and began ascending the stairs. Whither could I hide ? I luckily recollected the large chest ; so I flew up to the garret. It was now quite dark ; but I found the chest, sprang into it, and having closed the lid, flung some of the linen over me. I then heard the girl enter the next room, and in a few moments, she came into mine, with another person.

“ Here is the trunk, Tom,” said she, “ and I must lock it on you till the search is over. You see, Tom, what risks I am running on your account ; for there is Miss Jane, killed by it, and lying in bits, all about the floor.”

The man had now jumped into the chest; the girl locked it in an instant, took out the key, and ran down.

Almost prest to death, I made a sudden effort to get from under him.

"What's this! Oh! mercy, what's this?" cried he, feeling about.

I gathered myself up; but did not speak.

"Help!" vociferated he. "'Tis the monster—here is the hair! help, help!"

"Hush!" said I, "or you will betray both of us. I am no monster, but a woman."

"Was'nt it you that murdered the milliner?" said he, still trembling.

"No, really," replied I, "but now not a word; for I hear people coming."

As I spoke, several persons entered the room. We lay still. They searched about; and one of them, approaching the chest, tried to lift the lid.

"That is locked this month past," said the voice of the maid who had hidden the man in it, "so you need not look there."

They then searched the remaining garrets; and I heard them say, as they were going down stairs, that I must have jumped out of a window.

"And now, Madam," said the man, "will you have the goodness to tell me who you are?"

"A young and innocent maiden," answered I, "who, flying from my persecutors, took refuge here."

"Young and innocent!" cried he, "good ingredients, faith. Come then, my dear; I will protect you."

So saying, he caught me round the waist, and attempted to kiss me.

I begged, reasoned, menaced—all would not do. I had read of a heroine, whose virtue was saved by a timely

brain-fever ; so, as I could not command one at that instant, I determined on affecting one.

“ I murdered her famously !” exclaimed I ; and then commenced singing and moaning by turns.

He stopped, and lay quiet, as if uncertain what to make of me. I scratched the chest with my nails, and laughed, and shrieked. He began to mutter curses and prayers with great rapidity ; till, as I was gabbling over the finest passage in Ossian, “ Oh ! merciful !” ejaculated he, rolling himself into a ball ; “ ’tis a Bedlamite broke loose !”

By this time, between my terror, and the heat of the chest, I was gasping for breath ; and my companion appeared on the very point of suffocation ; when, at this critical juncture, some one fortunately came into the room. The man called for help, the chest was up-

locked, opened; and the maid with a candle appeared before us.

The man darted out like an arrow; she remained motionless with astonishment at seeing me, while I lay there, almost exhausted; though, as usual, not worth a swoon. I do believe, that the five fingers I am writing with would leave me, sooner than my five senses.

“She has confessed to the murder!” cried the man; while the maid held by his arm, and shrunk back, as I rose from the chest with an air of dignity.

“Be not frightened, my friends,” said I smiling, “for I assure you that I am no murderess; and that the milliner is alive and well, at this moment. Is she not, young woman?”

“Yes, sure,” answered she, somewhat recovering from her terror.

“How I came into this extraordinary situation,” continued I, “it were

needless to relate ; but I must have your assistance to get out of it. If you, my good girl, will supply me with a decent gown, bonnet, and pair of stockings, I will promise not to tell the family that you had a lover secreted in the house, and I will give you two guineas for your kindness."

So saying, I took the casket from the pocket of my regimental coat, and displayed the jewels and money that were in it.

" Mercy me !" cried the maid ; " how could they dare for to say that so rich a lady murdered the girl ? "

" Ay, or so handsome a lady," added the man, bowing.

In a word, after some explanations and compliments, I gave the maid four guineas, and the man the regimental coat ; and was supplied with a gown, bonnet, and pair of stockings.

As soon as I had dressed myself, we

determined that I should steal down stairs, and out of the house; and that, if discovered in my passage, I should not betray the maid.

Accordingly, with much trepidation, I began to descend the stairs. Not a soul seemed stirring. But as I passed by the milliner's room, I perceived the door half open, and heard some one humming a tune inside. I peeped through the chink, and saw the pretty milliner again seated there, and still busied about the Tuscan dress. I resolved to make another effort for it; and as I had gained my point with the maid, by having discovered her intrigue, it struck me that I might succeed with the milliner in a similar manner.

I therefore glided into the room, and seated myself just opposite to her.

"Your business, Ma'am?" said she, looking surprised.

“ To purchase that dress,” answered I.

“ ’Tis already purchased,” said she.

“ Do you remember the madwoman with the long hair ?” said I, as I took off my bonnet, and let down my tresses, with all the grandeur of virtue victorious over vice.

She started and turned pale.

“ You are the very person, I believe,” faltered she. “ What upon earth shall I do ?”

“ Do ?” cried I. “ Why sell me the Tuscan dress of course. The fact is—but let it go no farther—I am a heroine ; I am, I give you my word and honour. So, you know, the lady being wronged of the dress, (inasmuch as she is but an individual), is as nothing compared with the wrong that the community will sustain, if they lose the pleasure of finding that I get it from you. Sure the whole scene,

since I came to this house, ~~was~~ contrived for the express purpose of my procuring that individual costume; and just conceive what pretty confusion must take place, if, after all, you prevent me! My dear girl, we must do poetical justice. We must not disappoint the reader.

“ You will tell me, perhaps, that selling the dress is improper? Granted. But, recollect, what improper things are constantly done, in novels, to bring about a pre-determined event. Your amour with the gentleman, for instance; which I shall certainly tell your employer, if you refuse to sell me the dress.

“ As you value your own peace of mind, therefore, and in the name of all that is just, generous, and honorable, I conjure you to reflect for a moment, and you must see the matter in its ra-

tional light. What can you answer to these arguments?"

"That the person who could use them," said she, "will never listen to reason. I see what is the matter with you, and that I have no resource but to humour you, or be ruined." And she began crying.

To conclude, after a little farther persuasion, I got the dress, gave her ten guineas, and, tripping down stairs, effected a safe escape out of the house.

I then called a coach, and drove to Jerry Sullivan's; for I would not return to my lodgings, lest the conspirators there should prevent me from going to the masquerade.

The poor fellow jumped with joy when he saw me; but I found him in great distress. His creditors had threatened his little shop with immediate ruin, unless he would discharge

his debts. He had now provided the whole sum due, except forty pounds; but this he could not procure, and the creditors were expected every minute.

“I have only twelve guineas in the world,” said I, opening my casket, “but they are at your service.” And I put them into his hand.

“Dear Lady!” cried the wife, “what a mortal sight of jewels you have got! Do you know, now, I could borrow thirty pounds at least on them, at the pawnbroker’s; and that sum would just answer.”

“Nay,” said I, “I cannot consent to part with them; though, had I thirty pounds, I would sooner give it to you, than buy jewels with it.”

“Sure then,” cried she, “by the same rule, you would sooner sell your jewels, than let me want thirty pounds.”

"Not at all," answered I, "for I am fond of my jewels, and I do not care about money. Besides, have I not already given you twelve guineas?"

"You have," answered she, "and that is what vexes me. If you had given me nothing at all, I would not have minded, because you were a stranger. But first to make yourself our friend, by giving us twelve guineas, and then to refuse us the remainder—'tis so unnatural!"

"Ungrateful woman!" cried I. "Had I ten thousand pounds, you should not touch a farthing of it."

The arrival of the creditors interrupted us, and a touching scene ensued. The wife and daughter flung themselves on their knees, and wrung their hands, and begged for mercy; but the wretches were inexorable.

How could I remain unmoved? In

short, I slipped the casket into the wife's hand; out she ran with it, and in a few minutes returned with forty pounds. The creditors received the money due, passed receipts, and departed, and Jerry returned me the twelve guineas, saying: "Bless your sweet face, for 'tis that is the finger-post to heaven; though, to be sure, I can't look strait in it, after all you have done for me. Och! 'tis a murder to be under an obligation: so if just a little bit of mischief would happen you, and I to relieve you, as you did me, why that would make me *aisy*."

I am writing to you, from his house, while his daughter is finishing the sleeve of my Tuscan dress; and in a short time I shall be ready for the masquerade.

I confess I am not at all reconciled to the means I used in obtaining that

dress. I took advantage of the milliner's indiscretion in one instance, to make her do wrong in another. But doubtless my biographer will find excuses for me, which I cannot discover myself. Besides, the code of moral law that heroines acknowledge is often quite opposite from those maxims which govern other conditions of life. And, indeed, if we view the various ranks and departments of society, we shall see, that what is considered vicious in some of them, is not esteemed so in others. Thus: it is deemed dishonest in a servant to cheat his master of his wines, but it is thought perfectly fair for his master to defraud the King of the revenue from those wines. In the same way, what is called wantonness in a little minx with a flat face, is called only susceptibility in a heroine with an oval one. We weep at the letters

of Heloise; but were they written by an alderman's fat wife, we should laugh at them. The heroine may permit an amorous arm round her waist, fly in the face of her parents, and make assignments in dark groves, yet still be described as the most prudent of human creatures; but the mere Miss has no business to attempt any mode of conduct beyond modesty, decorum, and filial obedience. In a word, as different classes have distinct privileges, it appears to me, from what I have read of the law national, and the law romantic, that the heroine's prerogative is similar to the King's, and that she, like him, can do no wrong.

Adieu.

LETTER XXI.

O BIDDY, I have ascertained my genealogy. I am—but I must not anticipate. Take the particulars.

Having secured a comfortable bed at Jerry's, and eaten something (for I had fasted all day), I went with him in a coach to the Pantheon, where he promised to remain, and escort me back.

But I must first describe my Tuscan dress. It was a short petticoat of pale green, with a boddice of white silk ; the sleeves loose, and tied up at the shoulders with ribbons and bunches of flowers. My hair, which fell in ringlets on my neck, was also ornamented with flowers and a straw hat. I wore no mask, heroines so seldom do.

Palpitating with expectation, I en-

tered the assembly. Such a multitude of grotesque groups as presented themselves! Clowns, harlequins, nuns, devils; all talking and none listening. The clowns happy to be called fools, the harlequins as awkward as clowns, the nuns impudent, and the devils well-conducted. But as there is a description of a masquerade in almost every novel, you will excuse me from entering into farther particulars.

Too much agitated to support my character with spirit, I retired to a recess, and there anxiously awaited the arrival of the ancient vassal.

Hardly had I been seated five minutes, when an infirm and reverend old man approached, and sat down beside me. His feeble form was propt upon a long staff, a palsy shook his white locks, and his garments had all the quaintness of antiquity.

During some minutes, he gazed on me with earnestness, through a black mask ; at length, heaving a heavy sigh, he thus broke forth in tremulous accents :

“ Well-a-day ! how the scalding tears do run adown my furrowed cheeks ; for well I wis, thou beest herself—the Lady Cherubina De Willoughby, the long-lost daughter of mine honoured mistress !”

“ Speak, I beseech you !” cried I. “ Are you, indeed, the ancient and loyal vassal ?”

“ Now by my truly, ’tis even so,” said he.

I could have hugged the dear old man to my heart.

“ Welcome, thrice welcome, much respected menial !” cried I, grasping his hand. “ But keep me not in suspense. Unfold to me the heart-har-

rowing mysteries of my unhappy house!"

"Now by my fay," said he, "I will say forth my say. My name is Whylome Eftsoones, and I was accounted comely when a younker. But what boots that now? Beauty is like unto a flower of the field.—Good my lady, pardon a garrulous old man. So as I was saying, the damozels were once wont to leer at me right waggishly; but time changeth all things, as the proverb saith; and time hath changed my face, from that of a blithesome Ganymede to one of those heads which Guido has often painted; mild, pale, penetrating. Good my lady, I must tell thee a right pleasant and quaint saying of a certain nun, touching my face."

"For pity's sake," cried I, "and as you value the preservation of my

senses, continue your story without these digressions."

"Certes, my lady," said he. "Well, I was first taken, as a bonny page, into the service of thy great great grandfader's fader's brother; and I was in at the death of these four generations, till at last, I became seneschal to thine honoured fader, Lord De Wiloughby. His lordship married the Lady Hysterica Belamour, and thou wast the sole offspring of that ill-fated union.

"Soon after thy birth, thy noble father died of an apparition; or, as some will have it, of stewed lampreys. Returning, impierced with mickle dolour, from his funeral, which took place at midnight, I was stopped on a common, by a tall figure, with a mirksome cloak, and a flapped hat. I shook grievously, ne in that ghastly dreriment wist how myself to bear."

"I do not comprehend your expressions," interrupted I.

"I mean," said he, "I was in such a fright I did not know what to do. Anon, he threw aside his disguise, and I beheld—Lord Gwyn!"

"Lord Gwyn!" cried I.

"Yea," said he. "Lord Gwyn, who was ywedded unto Lord De Willoughby's sister, the Lady Eleanor?"

"Then Lady Eleanor Gwyn is my aunt!" cried I.

"Thou sayest truly," replied he. "My good Eftsoones," whispered Lord Gwyn to me, 'know you not that my wife, Lady Eleanor Gwyn, will enjoy all the extensive estates of her brother, Lord De Willoughby, if that brother's infant, the little Cherubina, were no more?'

"I trow, ween, and wote, 'tis as your lordship saith," answered I.

“ His lordship then put into mine hand a stiletto.

“ Eftsoones,’ said he, with a hollow voice, ‘ if this dagger be planted in a child’s heart, it will grow, and bear a golden flower!’

“ He spake, and incontinently took to striding away from me, in such wise, that maulgre and albe, I gan make effort after him, nathlesse and algates did child Gwyn forthwith flee from mine eyne.”

“ I protest most solemnly,” said I, “ I do not understand five words in the whole of that last sentence!”

“ And yet, my lady,” replied he, “ ’tis the pure well of English undefiled, and such as was yspoken in mine youth.”

“ But what can you mean by *child* Gwyn?” said I. “ Surely his lordship was no suckling at this time.”

“Child,” said Eftsoones, “signified a noble youth, some centuries ago; and it is coming into fashion again. For instance, there is Childe Harold.”

“Then,” said I, “there is ‘second childishness;’ and I fancy there will be ‘mere oblivion’ too. But if possible, finish your tale in the corrupt tongue.”

“I will endeavour,” said he. “Tempted by this implied promise of a reward, I took an opportunity of conveying you away from your mother, and of secreting you at the house of a peasant, whom I bribed to bring you up as his own daughter. I told Lord Gwyn that I had dispatched you, and he gave me three and fourpence halfpenny for my trouble.

“When the dear lady, your mother, missed you, she went through the most elegant extravagancies; till, having

plucked the last hair from her head, she ran wild into the woods, and has never been heard of since."

"Dearsainted sufferer!" exclaimed I.

"A few days ago," continued Eft-soones, "a messenger out of breath came to tell me, that the peasant to whom I had consigned you was dying, and wished to see me. I went. Such a scene! He confessed to me that he had sold you, body and bones, as he inelegantly expressed it, to one farmer Wilkinson, about thirteen years before; for that this farmer, having discovered your illustrious birth, speculated on a handsome consideration from Lord Gwyn, for keeping the secret. Now I am told there is a certain parchment—"

"Which I have!" cried I.

"And a certain portrait of Nell Gwyn—"

“ Which I have !”

“ And a mole just above your left temple —”

“ Which I have !” exclaimed I, in an ecstasy.

“ Then your title is made out, as clear as the sun,” said he ; “ and I bow, in contrition, before Lady Cherubina de Willoughby, rightful heiress of all the territory now appertaining, or that may hereinafter appertain, to the House of De Willoughby.”

“ Oh, dear, how delightful !” cried I. “ But my good friend, how am I to set about proving my title ?”

“ Nothing easier,” answered he. “ Lady Gwyn (for his lordship is dead) resides at this moment on your estate, which lies about thirty miles from Town ; so to-morrow morning you shall set off to see her ladyship, and make your claims known to her. I

will send a trusty servant with you, and will myself proceed before you, to prepare her for your arrival. You will therefore find me there."

While we were in the act of arranging affairs more accurately, who should make his appearance, but Stuart in a domino!

The moment he addressed me, old Eftsoones slunk away; nor could I catch another glimpse of him during the night.

Stuart told me that he had come to the masquerade, on the chance of finding me there, as I seemed so determined on going, the last time he was with me. He likewise explained the mystery of the darkened chamber, and the false alarm of fire.

It appears, that as soon as he had discovered the views of Betterton, he hired a lodging at the opposite side of

the street, and had two police officers there, for the purpose of watching Betterton's movements, and frustrating his attempts. He knocked several times in the course of yesterday, but was always answered that I had walked out. Knowing that I had not, he began to suspect foul play, and determined on gaining admittance to me. He therefore knocked once more, and then rushed into the house crying fire. This manœuvre had the desired effect, for an universal panic took place; and in the midst of it, he saw me issuing forth, and effect my escape. After having pursued me till he lost all traces of my route, he returned to my lodgings, and was informed by the poet, that Betterton had persuaded the landlady to fasten a carpet at the outside of my window, in order to make me remain in bed, till the time for the

masquerade should arrive; and thus prevent me from having an interview with Stuart.

We then walked up and down the room, while I gave him an account of the ancient and loyal vassal, and of all that I had heard respecting my family. He was silent on the subject; and only begged of me to point out Eftsoones, as soon as I should see him; but that interesting old man never appeared. However, I was in great hopes of another adventure; for a domino now began hovering about us so much, that Stuart at last addressed it; but it glided away. He said he knew it was Betterton.

In about an hour, I became tired of the scene; for no one took notice of my dress. We therefore bade Jerry, who was in waiting, call a coach; and we proceeded in it to his house.

On our way, I mentioned my determination of setting off to Lady Gwyn's the very next morning, as Eftsoones had promised to meet me there. Stuart, for a wonder, applauded my resolution; and even offered to accompany me himself.

"For," said he, "I think I know this old Eftsoones; and if so, I fancy you will find me useful in unravelling part of the mystery. Besides, I would assist, with all my soul, in any plan tending to withdraw you from the metropolis."

I snatched at his offer with joy; and it was then fixed that we should take a chaise the next morning, and go together.

On our arrival at the lodging, Stuart begged a bed of Jerry, that he might be ready for the journey in time; and the good-natured Irishman, finding

him my friend, agreed to make up a pallet for him in the parlour.

Matters were soon arranged, and we have just separated for the night.

Well, Biddy, what say you now? Have I not made a glorious expedition of it? A young, rich, beautiful titled heiress already—think of that, Biddy.

As soon as I can decently turn Lady Gwyn out of doors, I mean to set up a most magnificent establishment. But I will treat the poor woman (who perhaps is innocent of her husband's crime) with extreme delicacy. She shall never want a bed or a plate. By the by, I must purchase silver plate. My livery shall be white and crimson. Biddy, depend upon my patronage. How the parson and music-master will boast of having known me. Then our village will swarm so, *to hear tell as how* Miss Cherry has grown a great

lady. Old mother Muggins, at the bottom of the hill, will make a good week's gossip out of it. However, I mean to condescend excessively, for there is nothing I hate so much as pride.

Yet do not suppose that I am speculating upon an easy life. Though the chief obstacle to my marriage will soon be removed, by the confirmation of my noble birth, still I am not ignorant enough to imagine that no other impediments will interfere. Besides, to confess the fact, I do not feel my mind quite prepared to marry Montmorenci at so short a notice. Hitherto I have thought of him but as a lover, not as a husband—very different characters, in general.

Ah, no, my friend; be well assured, that adversity will not desert me quite so quickly. A present good is often

the prognostic of an approaching evil ; and when prosperity points its sunshine in our faces, misfortune, like our shadows, is sure to be behind.

Adieu.

LETTER XXII.

AFTER having breakfasted, and remunerated our entertainers, Stuart and I set out in a post-chaise, while Jerry ran at our side half way down the street, heaping me with blessings ; and bidding me come to him if ever I should be ruined. After we had advanced a few miles into the country, Stuart began to look frequently through the back window, and appeared uneasy. At length he stopped the carriage, and desired the driver to turn round. As soon as the man had

done so; another carriage, which, it seems, had followed us from London, passed us, and immediately turned after us.

" 'Tis as I thought!" cried Stuart, and stopping the chaise again, jumped out of it.

The chaise behind us also stopped; and a gentleman alighted from it and approached. But imagine my surprise, when I found that this gentleman was old Betterton! I could almost have embraced him, his villainous face looked so promising, and so pregnant with mischief.

" Sir," said he to Stuart, " as you have perceived me following your carriage, I find myself compelled, however unwillingly, to declare my motives for doing so. Last night I happened to be at the Pantheon, in a domino, and saw you there escorting this

lady. I confess I had long before suspected your intentions towards her, and seeing you now together at a masquerade, and without a matron, I did not feel my suspicions lessened. I therefore had you both traced home, and I found, to my great horror, that you stopped at a wretched, and, as I am informed, infamous house in St. Giles's, where you remained during the night. I found too, that a chaise was at the door of it this morning : whence concluding, as I well might, that an elopement was in agitation, I determined, if possible, to prevent so dreadful a catastrophe, by hiring a carriage and pursuing you.

“ Sir, you undertook to lecture me, when last I saw you; and plausibly enough you performed your part. It is now my duty to return the obligation. Mr. Stuart, Mr. Stuart, is it not

a shame for you, Mr. Stuart? Is this the way to treat the daughter of your friend, Mr. Stuart? Go, silly boy, return to your home; and bless that heaven which hath sent me to the rescue of this fair unfortunate."

"By all that is comical," cried Stuart, laughing immoderately, "this is too ludicrous even to be angry at! Miss Wilkinson, allow me to introduce you to Mr. Whylome Eftsoones, an ancient and loyal vassal of the De Willoughbys;—a mere modern in his principles, I am afraid; but addicted, I wis, to antiquated language."

Betterton, I thought, looked rather blank, as he said, "Really, Sir, I do not understand ——"

"But really, Sir," cried Stuart, "I *do* understand. I understand, that if you would take less trouble in protecting this lady's honour, you would

have a better chance of preserving your own."

"Sir," answered Betterton, "I will have you to know, that I would sacrifice my life in defence of my honour."

"Well, then," said Stuart, "though your life has but little of the saint, it will, at least, have something of the martyr."

Betterton scowled at him askance, and grinned a thousand devils.

"Hear me, gentlemen," cried I. "If either of you again say any thing disrespectful or insulting to the other, I declare, on my honour, he shall leave me instantly. At present, I should be happy if both would do me the favour of escorting me to Lady Gwyn's, as I may meet with treatment there that will render the support of friends indispensable."

It was now Stuart's turn to look downcast, and Betterton's to smile triumphant. The fact is, I wished to shew this admirable villain how grateful I felt for his meritorious conduct in not having deserted me.

"I will accept of your invitation with pleasure," said he, "for my seat lies within a few miles of her ladyship, and I wish to visit my tenantry."

It was now noon. A few fleecy clouds floated in the blue depths of ether. The breeze brought coolness on its wings, and an inviting valley, watered by a rivulet, lay on the left; here whitened with sheep, and there dotted with little encampments of hay.

Exhilarated by the scene, after so long a confinement in the smoke and stir of London, I proposed to my companions the rural exercise of walk-

ing, as preferable to proceeding cooped up in a carriage. Each, whatever was his motive, caught at the proposal with delight, and we dismissed our chaises.

I now hastened to luxuriate in Arcadian beatitude. The pastoral habit of Tuscany was favourable; nothing remained but to rival an *Ida*, or a *Glorvina*, in simple touches of nature; and to trip along the lawns, like a *Daphne* or a *Hamadryad*.

In an instant, I sprang across a hedge, and fled towards the little valley, light as a wood-nymph flying from a satyr. I then took up a most picturesque position. It was beside of the streamlet, under a weeping willow, and on a grassy bank. Close behind me lay one of the most romantic cottages that I had ever seen, and at its back was a small garden, encompassed by green

paling. The stream, bordered with wild-flowers, prattled prettily; save here and there, where a jutting stone shattered its crystal, and made its music hoarse. It purled and murmured a little too, but no where could it be said either to tinkle or gurgle, to chide or brawl.

Flinging off my bonnet, I shook my narcissine locks over my shoulders, and began braiding them in the manner of a simple shepherdess.

Stuart came up the first. I plucked a daisy that was half dipt into the brook; and instead of shaking off its moisture, I quaffed the liquid fragrance with my lip, and then held the flower to him.

"What am I to do with it?" said he.

"To pledge me," replied I. "To drink Nature's nectar, that trembles

on the leaves which my lip has consecrated."

He laughed and kissed the flower. That moment a lambkin began its pretty bleat.

"Now," said I, "make me a simple tripping little ditty on a lambkin."

"You shall have it," answered he, "and such as an attorney's clerk would read to a milliner's apprentice."

Dear sensibility, O la !
I heard a little lamb cry, ba;
Says I, so you have lost mamma ?
Ah !

The little lamb, as I said so,
Frisking about the field did go,
And frisking, trod upon my toe.
Oh !

"Neat enough," said I, "only that it wants the word LOVE in it."

“ True,” cried Stuart ; “ for all modern poems of the kind abound in the word, though they seldom have much of the feeling.”

“ And pray, my good friend,” asked I archly, as I bound up my golden ringlets—“ WHAT IS LOVE ?”

“ Nay,” said he, “ they say that talking of love is making it.”

Plucking a thistle that sprang from the bank, I blew away its down with my balmy breath, merely to hide my confusion.

Surely I am the most sensitive of all created beings !

Betterton had now reached us, out of breath after his race, and utterly unable to articulate.

“ Betterton,” cried I, “ what is love ?”

“ ’Tis,” said he, gasping, “ ’tis—’tis—”

“The gentleman,” cried Stuart, “gives as good a description of it as most of our modern poets; who make its chief ingredients panting and broken murmurs.”

“Now in my opinion,” said I, “love is a mystical sympathy, which unfolds itself in the glance that seeks the soul,—the sentiment that the soul embodies — the tender gaiety — the more delicious sadness — the stifled sigh — the soft and malicious smile — the thrill, the hope, the fear — each in itself a little bliss. In a word, it is the swoon of the soul, the delirium of the heart, the elegant inebriety of unsophisticated sentiment.”

“If such be love,” said Stuart, “I fear I shall never bring myself to make it.”

“And pray,” said I, “how would you make love?”

“There are many modes,” answered he, “and the way to succeed with one girl is often the way to fail with another. Girls may be divided into the conversable and inconvertible. He who can talk the best, has therefore the best chance of the former; but would a man make a conquest of one of the beautiful Inutilities, who sits in sweet stupidity, plays off the small simpers, and founds her prospects in life on the shape of her face, he has little more to do than call her a goddess and make himself a monkey. Or if that should fail, as he cannot apply to her understanding, he must have recourse to her feeling, and try what the touch can do for him. The touch has a thousand virtues. Only let him establish a lodgment on the first joint of her little finger, he may soon set out on his travels, and make the grand tour

of her waist. This is, indeed, to have wit at his fingers' ends; and this, I can assure you, is the best and shortest way to gain the hearts of those demure misses, who think that all modesty consists in silence, that to be insipid is to be innocent, and that because they have not a word for a young man in public, they may have a kiss for him in private."

"Come," said I, "let us talk of love in poetry, not prose. I want some pretty verses to fill up my memoirs; so, Betterton, now for an amorous ode to your mistress."

Betterton bowed and began:

TO FANNY.

Say, Fanny, why has bounteous heaven,
In every end benign and wise,
Perfection to your features given?
Enchantment to your witching eyes?

Was it that mortal man might view
Thy charms at distance, and adore ?
Ah, no ! the man who would not woo,
Were less than mortal, or were more.

The mossy rose that scents the sky,
By bee, by butterfly caress'd,
We leave not on the stalk to die,
But fondly snatch it to the breast.

There, unsurpassed in sweets, it dwells ;—
Unless the breast be Fanny's own :
There blooming, every bloom excels ;—
Except of Fanny's blush alone.

O Fanny, life is on the wing,
And years, like rivers, glide away :
To-morrow may misfortune bring,
Then, gentle girl, enjoy to-day.

And while a lingering kiss I sip,
Ah, start not from these ardent arms ;
Nor think the printure of my lip
Will rob your own of any charms.

For see, we crush not, though we tread,
The cup and primrose. Fanny smiled.
Come then and press the cup, she said,
Come then and press the primrose wild.

“ Now,” cried Stuart, “ I can give you a poem, with just as much love in it, and twice as much kissing.”

“ That,” said I, “ would be a treasure indeed.”

He then began thus :

TO SALLY.

Dawn with stains of ruddy light,
Streaks her grey and fragrant fingers,
While the Ethiop foot of night,
Envious of my Sally, lingers.

Upward poplars, downward willows,
Rustle round us; zephyrs sprinkle
Leaves of daffodillies, lilies,
Pennyroyal, periwinkle.

Rosy, balmy, honied, humid,
Biting, burning, murmuring kisses,
Sally, I will snatch from you, mid
Looks demure that tempt to blisses.

If your cheek grow cold, my dear,
I will kiss it, till it flushes,
Or if warm, my raptured tear,
Shall extinguish all its blushes.

Yes, that dimple is a valley,
Where sports many a little true love,
And that glance you dart, my Sally,
Might melt diamonds into dew love.

But while idle thus I chat,
I the war of lips am missing.
This, this, this, and that, that, that,
These make kissing, kissing, kissing."

The style of this poem reminded me of Montmorenci, and at the same moment I heard a rustling sound behind me. I started. "'Tis Montmorenci!" cried I.

Agitated in the extreme, I turned to see.—It was only a cock-sparrow.

"I deserve the disappointment," said I to myself, "for I have never once thought of that amiable youth since I last beheld him. "Sweetest and noblest of men," exclaimed I, aloud, "say, dost thou mourn my mysterious absence? Perhaps the

draught of air that I now inhale is the same which thou hast breathed forth, in a sigh for the far distant Cherubina!"

"That cannot well be," interrupted Stuart, "or at least the sigh of this unknown must have been packed up in a case, and hermetically sealed, to have come to you without being dispersed on the way."

"There you happen to be mistaken," answered I. "For in the Hermit of the Rock, the heroine, while sitting on the coast of Sardinia, seemed to think it highly probable, that the billow at her feet might be the identical billow which had swallowed up her lover, about a year before, off the coast of Martinique."

"That was not at all more improbable than Valancourt's theory," said Stuart.

“What was it?” asked I.

“Why,” said he, “that the sun sets, in different longitudes, at the same moment. For when his Emily was going to Italy, while he remained in France, he begged of her to watch the setting of the sun every evening, that both their eyes might be fixed upon the same object at once. Now, as the sun would set, where she was in Italy, much earlier than where he was in France, he certainly took the best of all possible methods to prevent their looking at it together.”

“But, Sir,” said Betterton, “heroes and heroines are not bound to understand astronomy.”

“And yet,” answered Stuart, “they are greater star-gazers than the ancient Egyptians. To form an attachment for the moon, and write a sonnet on it, is the principal test of being a heroine.”

As he spoke, a painted butterfly came fluttering about me. To pursue it was a classical amusement, for Caroline of Lichfield made a butterfly-hunt her pastime ; so springing on my feet, I began the chase. The nimble insect eluded me for a long time, and at last got over the paling, into the little garden. I followed it through a small gate, and caught it ; but alas ! bruised it in the capture, and broke one of its wings. The poor thing sought refuge in a lily, where it lay struggling a few moments, and then its little spirit fled for ever.

What an opportunity for a sonnet ! I determined to compose one under the willow. A beautiful rose-bush was blushing near the lily, and reminded me how pastoral I should look, could I recline on roses, during my poetical ecstasy. But would it be pro-

per to pick them? Surely a few could do no harm. I glanced round—Nobody was in sight—I picked a few. But what signified a few for what I wanted? I picked a few more. The more I picked, the more I longed to pick—'Tis human nature; and was not Eve herself tempted in a garden? So from roses I went to lilies, from lilies to carnations, thence to jessamine, honeysuckle, eglantine, sweet-pea; till, in short, I had filled my bonnet, and almost emptied the beds. I then hurried to the willow with my prize; sentenced Stuart and Betterton to fifty yards banishment, and constructed a charming couch of flowers, which I damasked and inlaid with daisies, butterflowers, and moss.

Enraptured with my paradisaical carpet, I flung myself upon it, and my recumbent form, as it pressed the per-

fumes, was indeed that of Mahomet's Houri. Exercise and agitation had heightened the glow of my cheeks, and the wind had blown my yellow hair about my face, like withered leaves round a ripened peach. I never looked so lovely.

In a short time I was able to repeat this sonnet aloud.

SONNET.

Where the blue stream reflected flowerets pale,
A fluttering butterfly, with many a freak,
Dipped into dancing bells, and spread its sail
Of azure pinions, edged with jetty streak.
I snatched it passing ; but a pinion frail,
Ingrained with mealy gold, I chanced to break.
The mangled insect, ill deserving bane,
Falls in the hollow of a lily new.
My tears drop after it, but drop in vain.
The cup, embalmed with azure airs and dew,
And flowery dust and grains of fragrant seed,
Can ne'er revive it from the fatal deed.
So guileless nymphs attract some traiterous eye,
So by the spoiler crushed, reject all joy and die.

Now that the pomp of composition was over, I began to think I had treated the owner of the garden extremely ill. I felt myself guilty of little less than theft, and was deliberating on what I ought to do, when an old, grey-headed peasant came running towards me from the garden.

“Miss!” cried he, “have you seen any body pass this way with a parcel of flowers; for some confounded thief has just robbed me of all I had?”

I raised myself a little to reply, and he perceived the flowers underneath.

“Odd’s life!” cried he, “so you are the thief, are you? How dare you, hussey, commit such a robbery?”

“I am no hussey, and ’tis no robbery,” cried I; “and trust me, you shall neither have apology nor compensation. Hussey, indeed! Sir, it was all your own fault for leaving that un-

couth gate of your's open. I am afraid, Sir, that you are a shockingly ignorant old man.''

The peasant was just about to seize me, when Stuart ran up, and prevented him. They had then some private conversation together, and I saw Stuart give him a guinea. The talismanic touch of gold struck instant peace, and a compact of amity followed. Indeed, I have ever found, that even my face, though a heroine's, and with all its dimples, blushes, and glances, could never do half so much for me as the royal face on a bit of gold.


The peasant was now very civil, and invited us to rest in his cottage. Thither we repaired, and found his daughter, a beautiful young woman, just preparing the dinner. I felt instantly interested in her fate. I likewise felt hungry ; so calling her aside, I told

her that I would be happy to have a dinner, and, if possible, a bed, at the cottage ; and that I would recompense her liberally for them, as I was a lady of rank, but at present in great affliction.

She said she would be very glad to accommodate me, if her father would permit her ; and she then went to consult him. After a private conference between them and Stuart, she told me that her father was willing to let me remain. So we soon agreed upon the terms, and a village was at hand, where Stuart and Betterton might dine and sleep.

Before they left me, they made me give a solemn promise not to quit the cottage, till both of them should return, the next morning.

Stuart took an opportunity of asking me, whether he could speak to me in private, that evening.



"At ten o'clock to-night," answered I, "I will be sitting at the casement of my chamber. Trill a lamenting canzonet beneath it, as a signal, and I will admit you to a stolen interview."

Betterton and he then departed, but not in company with each other.

Dinner is announced.

Adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

At dinner, a young farmer joined us; and I soon perceived that he and the peasant's daughter, Mary, were born for each other. They betrayed their mutual tenderness by a thousand little innocent stratagems, that passed, as they thought, unobserved.

After dinner, when Mary was about accompanying me to walk, the youth stole after us, and just as I had got

into the garden, he drew her back, and I heard him kiss her. She came to me with her face a little flushed, and her ripe lips ruddier than before.

"Well, Mary," said I, "what was he doing to you?"

"Doing, Ma'am? Nothing, I am sure."

"Nothing, Mary?"

"Why, Ma'am, he only wanted to be a little rude, and kiss me, I believe."

"And you would not allow him, Mary?"

"Why should I tell a falsehood about it, Ma'am?" said she. "To be sure I did not hinder him; for he is my sweetheart, and we are to be married next week."

"And do you love him, Mary?"

"Better than my life, Ma'am. There never was such a good lad; he has not

a fault in the wide world, and all the girls are dying of envy that I have got him."

"Well, Mary," said I, "I foresee we shall spend a most delicious evening. We will take a rural repast down to the brook, and tell our loves. The contrast will be beautiful ;—mine, the refined, sentimental, pathetic story ; your's the pretty, simple, little, artless tale. Come, my friend ; let us return, and prepare the rustic banquet. No souchong, or bohea ; (blessed names these !) no hot or cold cakes—Oh ! no, but creams, berries, and fruits ; goat's milk, figs, and honey—Arcadian, pastoral, primeval dainties !"

We then went back to the cottage, but could get nothing better than currants, gooseberries, and a maple bowl of cream. Mary, indeed, cut a large slice of bread and butter for her pri-

vate amusement; and with these we returned to the streamlet. I then threw myself on my flowery couch, and my companion sat beside me.

We helped ourselves. I took rivulet to my cream, and scooped the brook with my rosy palm. Innocent nymph! ah, why couldst thou not sit down in the lap of content here, and dance, and sing, and say thy prayers, and go to heaven with this nut-brown maid?

I picked up a languishing rose, and sighed as I inhaled its perfume, and gazed on its decay.

“Such, Mary,” said I, “such will be the fate of you and me. How soft, how serene this evening. It is a landscape for a Claud. But how much more charming is an Italian or a French than an English landscape. O! to saunter over hillocks, covered

with lavender, wild thyme, juniper and tamarise, while shrubs fringe the summits of the rocks, or patches of meagre vegetation tint their recesses! Plantations of almonds, cypresses, palms, olives, and dates stretch along; nor are the larch and ilex, the masses of granite, and dark forests of fir wanting; while the majestic Garonne wanders, descending from the Pyrenees, and winding its blue waves towards the Bay of Biscay.

“Is not all this exquisite, Mary?”

“It must, Ma’am, since you say so,” replied she.

“Then,” continued I, “though your own cottage is tolerable, yet is it, as in Italy, covered with vine leaves, fig-trees, jessamine, and clusters of grapes? Is it tufted with myrtle, or shaded with a grove of lemon, orange, and bergamot?”

“ But Ma’am,” said Mary, “ ’tis shaded by some fine old elms.”

“ True,” cried I, with the smile of approaching triumph. “ But do the flowers of the spreading agnus castus mingle with the pomegranate of Shem-lek? Does the Asiatic andrachne rear its red trunk? Are the rose-coloured nerit, and verdant alia marina imboast upon the rocks? And do the golden clusters of Eastern spartium gleam amidst the fragrant foliage of the cedrat, the most elegant shrub of the Levant? Do they, Mary?”

“ I believe not, Ma’am,” answered she. “ But then our fields are all over daisies, butterflowers, clover-blossoms, and daffodowndillies.

“ Daffodowndillies!” cried I. “ Ah, Mary, Mary, you may be a very good girl, but you do not shine in description. Now I leave it to your own taste,

which sounds better, — Asiatic an-drachne, or daffodowndillies? If you knew any thing of novels, you would describe for the ear, not for the eye. Oh, my young friend, never, while you live, say daffodowndillies."

"Never, if I can help it, Ma'am," said Mary. "And I hope you are not offended with me, or think the worse of me, on account of my having said it now; for I could safely make oath that I never heard, till this instant, of its being a naughty word."

"I am satisfied," said I. "So now let us tell our loves, and you shall begin."

"Indeed, Ma'am," said she, "I have nothing to tell."

"Impossible," cried I. "Did William never save your life?"

"Never, Ma'am."

"Well then, he had a quarrel with you?"

"Never, in all his born days, Ma'am."

"Shocking!" Why how long have you known him?"

"About six months, Ma'am. He took a small farm near us; and he liked me from the first, and I liked him, and both families wished for the match; and when he asked me to marry him, I said I would; and so we shall be married next week; and that is the whole history, Ma'am."

"A melancholy history, indeed!" said I. "What a pity that an interesting pair, like you, who, without flattery, seem born for one of Marmon-
tel's tales, should be so cruelly sacrificed."

I then began to consider whether any thing could yet be done in their behalf, or whether the matter was indeed past redemption. I reflected that

it would be but an act of common charity, — hardly deserving praise — to snatch them awhile from the dogged and headlong way they were setting about matrimony, and introduce them to a few of the sensibilities. Surely with very little ingenuity, I might get up an incident or two between them; — a week or a fortnight's torture, perhaps; — and afterwards enjoy the luxury of reuniting them.

Full of this laudable intention, I sat meditating awhile; and at length hit upon an admirable plan. It was no less than to make Mary (without her own knowledge) write a letter to William, dismissing him for ever! This appears impossible, but attend.

“My story,” said I, to the unsuspecting girl, “is long and lamentable, and I fear, I have not spirits to relate it. I shall merely tell you, that I

yesterday eloped with the younger of the gentlemen who were here this morning, and married him. I was induced to take this step, in consequence of my parents having insisted that I should marry my first cousin; who, by the by, is a namesake of your William's. Now, Marry, I have a favour to beg of you. My cousin William must be made acquainted with my marriage; though I mean to keep it a secret from my family, and as I do not wish to tell him such unhappy tidings in my own hand-writing—and in high life, my fair rustic, young ladies must not write to young gentlemen, your taking the trouble to write out the letter for me, would bind me to you for ever."

"That I will, and welcome," said the simple girl; "only Ma'am, I fear I shall disgrace a lady like you, with my

bad writing. I am, out and out, the worst scribbler in our family; and William says to me but yesterday, ah, Mary, says he, if your tongue talked as your pen writes, you might die an old maid for me. Ah, William, says I, I would bite off my tongue sooner than die an old maid. So, to be sure, Willy laughed very hearty."

We then returned home, and retired to my chamber, where I dictated, and Mary wrote as follows:

" Dear William,

" Prepare your mind for receiving a great and unexpected shock. To keep you no longer in suspense, learn that I am MARRIED.

" Before I had become acquainted with you, I was attached to another man, whose name I must beg leave to conceal. About a year since, circum-

stances compelled him to go abroad, and before his departure, he procured a written promise from me, to marry him on the first day of his return. You then came, and succeeded in rivalling him.

“ As he never once wrote, after he had left the country, I concluded that he was dead. Yesterday, however, a letter from him was put into my hand, which announced his return, and appointed a private interview. I went. He had a clergyman in waiting to join our hands. I prayed, entreated, wept—all in vain.

“ I BECAME HIS WIFE.

“ O William, pity, but do not blame me. If you are a man of honour and of feeling, never shew this letter, or tell its contents to one living soul. Do not even speak to myself on the subject of it.

“ You see I pay your own feelings the compliment of not signing the name that I now bear.

“ Adieu, dear William: adieu for ever.”

We then returned to the sitting-room, and found William there. While we were conversing, I took an opportunity to slip the letter, unperceived, into his hand, and to bid him read it in some other place. He retired with it, and we continued talking. But in about half an hour he hurried into the room, with an agitated countenance; stopped opposite to Mary, and looked at her earnestly.

“ William!” cried she, “ William! For shame then, don’t frighten one so.”

“ No, Mary,” said he, “ I scorn to frighten you, or injure you either. I believe I am above that. But no

wonder my last look at you should be frightful. There is your true-lover's knot—there is your hair—there are your letters. So now, Mary, good-by, and may you be for ever happy, is what I pray Providence, from the bottom of my broken heart!"

With these words, and a piteous glance of anguish, he rushed from the room.

Mary remained motionless a moment; then half rose, sat down, rose again; and grew pale and red by turns.

"'Tis so—so laughable," said she at length, while her quivering lip refused the attempted smile. "All my presents returned too. Sure — my heavens! — Sure he cannot want to break off with me? Well, I have as good a spirit as he, I believe. The base man; the cruel, cruel man!" and she burst into a passion of tears.

I tried to sooth her, but the more I said, the more she wept. She was sure, she said, she was quite sure that he wanted to leave her; and then she sobbed so piteously, that I was on the point of undeceiving her; when, fortunately, we heard her father returning, and she ran into her own room. He asked about her; I told him that she was not well;—the old excuse of a fretting heroine; so the good man went to her, and with difficulty gained admittance. They have remained together ever since.

How delicious will be the happy denouement of this pathetic episode, this dear novellette; and how sweetly will it read in my memoirs!

Adieu.

LETTER XXIV.

THE night was so dark when I repaired to the casement, that I have been trying to compose a description of it for you, in the style of the best romances. But after having summoned to my mind all the black articles of value that I can recollect—ebony, sables, palls, pitch, and even coal, I find I have nothing better to say, than, simply, that it was a dark night.

Having opened the casement, I sat down at it, and repeated these lines aloud.

SONNET.

Now while within their wings each feather'd pair,

Hide their hush'd heads, thy visit, moon,
renew,

Shake thy pale tresses down, irradiate air,

Earth, and the spicy flowers that scent the
dew.

The lonely nightingale shall pipe to thee,
And I will moralize her minstrelsy.

Ten thousand birds the sun resplendent sing,
One only warbles to the milder moon.

Thus for the great, how many wake the string,
Thus for the good, how few the lyre attune.

As soon as I had finished the sonnet, a low and tremulous voice, close to the casement, sung these words :

SONG.

Haste, my love, and come away ;
What is folly, what is sorrow ?
'Tis to turn from joys to-day,
'Tis to wait for cares to-morrow.

O'er the river,
Aspens shiver :
Thus I tremble at delay.
Light discovers,
Vowing lovers :

See the stars with sharpened ray,
Gathering thicker,
Glancing quicker ;
Haste, my love, and come away.

I sat enraptured, and heaved a sigh.

“Enchanting sigh!” cried the singer, as he sprang through the window; but it was not the voice of Stuart.

I screamed loudly.

“Hush!” cried the mysterious unknown, and advanced towards me; when, to my great relief, the door was thrown open, and the old peasant entered, with Mary behind him, holding a candle.

In the middle of the room, stood a man, clad in a black cloak, with black feathers in his hat, and a black mask on his face.

The peasant, pale as death, ran forward, knocked him to the ground, and seized a pistol and carving-knife, that were stuck in a belt about his waist.

“Unmask him!” cried I.

The peasant, kneeling on his body,

tore off the mask, and I beheld—Betterton!

“Alarm the neighbours, Mary!” cried the peasant.

Mary put down the candle, and went out.

“I must appear in an unfavourable light to you, my good man,” said this terrifying character; “but the young lady will inform you that I came hither at her own request.”

“For shame!” cried I. “What a falsehood!”

“Falsehood!” said he. “I have your own letter, desiring me to come.”

“The man is mad,” cried I. “I never wrote him a letter.”

“I can produce it to your face,” said he, pulling a paper from his pocket, and to my great amazement reading these lines.

“Cherubina begs that Betterton

will repair to her window, at ten o'clock to-night, disguised like an Italian assassin, with dagger, cloak, and pistol. The signal is to be his singing an air under the casement, which she will then open, and he may enter her chamber."

"I will take the most solemn oath," cried I, "that I never wrote a line of it. But this unhappy wretch, who is a ruffian of the first pretensions, has a base design upon me, and has followed me from London, for the purpose of effecting it; so I suppose, he wrote the letter himself, as an excuse, in case of discovery."

"Then he shall march to the magistrate's," said the peasant, "and I will indict him for house-breaking!"

A man half so frantic as Betterton I never beheld. He foamed, he grinned, he grinded the remnants of his

teeth ; and swore that Stuart was at the bottom of the whole plot.

By this time, Mary having returned with two men, we set forward in a body to the magistrate's, and delivered our depositions before him. I swore that I did not write the letter, and that, to the best of my belief, Betterton harboured bad designs against me.

The peasant swore that he had found the culprit, armed with a knife and pistol, in his house.

The magistrate, therefore, notwithstanding all that Betterton could say, committed him to prison without hesitation.

As they were leading him away, he cast a furious look at the magistrate, and said:

“ Ay, Sir, I suppose you are one of those pensioned justices, who minister

our vague and sanguinary laws, and do dark deeds for our usurping oligarchy, that has assumed a power of making our most innocent actions misdemeanours, of determining points of law without appeal, of imprisoning our persons without trial, and of breaking open our houses with the standing army. But nothing will go right till we have a reform in Parliament.---neither peace nor war, commerce nor agriculture--"

"Clocks nor watches, I suppose," said the magistrate.

"Ay, clocks nor watches," cried Betterton, in a rage. "For how can our mechanics make any thing good, while a packed parliament deprives them of money and a mart?"

"So then," said the magistrate, "if St. Dunstan's clock is out of order, 'tis owing to the want of a reform in Parliament."

“ I have not the most distant doubt of it,” cried Betterton.

“ ’Tis fair then,” said the magistrate, “ that the reformists should take such a latitude as they do ; for, probably, by their encouragement of time-pieces, they will at last discover the longitude.”

“ No sneering, Sir,” cried Betterton. “ Now do your duty, as you call it, and abide the consequence.”

This gallant grey Lothario was then led off ; and our party returned home.

Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

I ROSE early this morning, and repaired to my favourite willow, to contemplate the placid landscape. Flinging myself on the grass, close to the brook, I began to warble a rustic ma-

drigal. I then let down my length of tresses, and, stooping over the streamlet, laved them in the little urn of the dimpling Naiad.

This, you know, was agreeable enough, but the accident that befel me was not. For, leaning too much over, I lost my balance, and rolled headlong into the middle of the rivulet. As it was shallow, I did not fear being drowned, but as I was a heroine, I hoped to be rescued. Therefore, instead of rising, as I might easily have done, there I lay, shrieking and listening, and now and then lifting up my head, in hopes to see Stuart come flying towards me on the wings of the wind. Oh no! my gentleman thought proper to make himself scarce; so dripping, shivering, and indignant, I scrambled out, and bent my steps towards the cottage.

On turning the corner of the hedge, who should I perceive at the door, but the hopeful youth himself, quite at his ease, and blowing a penny trumpet for a chubby boy.

“What has happened to you?” said he, seeing me so wet.

“Only that I fell into the brook,” answered I, “and was under the disagreeable necessity of saving my own life, when I expected that you would have condescended to take the trouble off my hands.”

“Expected!” cried he. “Surely you had no reason for supposing that I was so near to you, as even to have witnessed the disaster.”

“And it is, therefore,” retorted I, “that you ought to have been so near me as to have witnessed it.”

“You deal in riddles,” said he.

“Not at all,” answered I. “For the

farther off a distressed heroine believes a hero, the nearer he is sure to be. Only let her have good grounds for supposing him at her Antipodes, and nine times out of ten she finds him at her elbow."

"Well," said he, laughing, "though I did not save your life, I will not endanger it, by detaining you in your wet dress. Pray hasten to change it."

I took his advice, and borrowed some clothes from Mary, while mine were put to the fire. After breakfast, I once more equipped myself in my Tuscan costume, and a carriage being ready for us, I took an affectionate leave of that interesting rustic. Poor girl! Her attempts at cheerfulness all the morning were truly tragical; and, absorbed in another sorrow, she felt but little for my departure.

On our way, Stuart confessed that

he was the person who wrote the letter to Betterton in my name; and that he did so for the purpose of entrapping him in such a manner as to prevent him from accompanying me farther. He was at the window during the whole scene; as he meant to have seized Betterton himself, had not the peasant done so.

"You will excuse my thus interfering in your concerns," added he; "but gratitude demands of me to protect the daughter of my guardian; and friendship for her improves the duty to a pleasure."

"Ah!" said I, "however it has happened, I fear you dislike me strangely."

"Believe me, you mistake," answered he. "With a few foibles (which are themselves as fascinating as foibles can be), you possess many vir-

tues; and, let me add, a thousand attractions. I who tell you blunt truths, may well afford you flattery."

"Flattery," said I, pleased by his praises, and willing to please him in return by serious conversation, "deserves censure only when the motive for using it is mean or vicious."

"Your remark is a just one," observed he. "Flattery is often but the hyperbole of friendship; and even though a compliment itself may not be sincere, our motive for paying it may be good. Flattery, so far from injuring, may sometimes benefit the object of it; for it is possible to create a virtue in others, by persuading them that they possess it."

"Besides," said I, "may we not pay a compliment, without intending that it should be believed; but merely

to make ourselves agreeable by an effort of the wit? And since such an effort shews that we consider the person flattered worthy of it the compliment proves a kind intention at least, and thus tends to cement affection and friendship."

In this manner Stuart insensibly led me to talk on grave topics; and we continued a delightful conversation the remainder of the day. Sometimes he seemed greatly gratified at my sprightly sallies, or serious remarks; but never could I throw him off his guard, by the dangerous softness of my manner. He now calls me the lovely visionary.

Would you believe that this laughing, careless, unpathetic creature, is a poet, and a poet of feeling, as the following lines will prove. But whether he wrote them on a real or an imaginary

being, I cannot, by any art, extract
from him.

THE FAREWELL.

Go, gentle muse, 'tis near the gloomy day,
Long dreaded ; go, and say farewell for me ;
A sad farewell to her who deigned thee, say,
For far she hastens hence. Ah, hard decree !

Tell her I feel that at the parting hour,
More than the waves will heave in tumult wild:
More than the skies will threat a gushing shower,
More than the breeze will breathe a murmur
mild.

Say that her influence flies not with her form,
That distant she will still engage my mind :
That suns are most remote when most they warm,
That flying Parthians scatter darts behind.

Lòng will I gaze upon her vacant home,
As the bird lingers near its pilfered nest,
There, will I cry, she turned the studious tome ;
There sported, there her envied pet caressed.

124 THE HEROINE.

There, while she plied accomplished works of art,
I saw her form, inclined with Sapphic grace ;
Her radiant eyes, blest emblems of her heart,
And all the living treasures of her face.

The Parian forehead parting clustered hair,
The cheek of peachy tinct, the meaning brow ;
The witching archness, and the grace so rare,
So magical, it charmed I knew not how.

Light was her footstep as the silent flakes
Of falling snow ; her smile was blithe as morn ;
Her dimple, like the print the berry makes,
In some smooth lake, when dropping from the
thorn.

To snatch her passing accents as she spoke,
To see her slender hand, (that future prize)
Fling back a ringlet, oft I dared provoke,
The gentle vengeance of averted eyes.

Yet ah, what wonder, if, when shrinking awe
Withheld me from her sight, I broke my chain ?
Or when I made a single glance my law,
What wonder if that law were made in vain ?

And say, can nought but converse love inspire?
What tho' for me her lips have never moved?
The vale that speaks but with its feathered choir,
When long beheld, eternally is loved.

Go then, my muse, 'tis near the gloomy day
Of parting; go, and say farewell for me;
A sad farewell to her who deigned thee, say,
Whate'er engage her, wheresoe'er she be.

If slumbering, tell her in my dreams she sways,
If speaking, tell her in my words she glows;
If thoughtful, tell her in my thoughts she strays,
If tuneful, tell her in my song she flows.

Tell her that soon my dreams unblest will prove;
That soon my words on absent charms will
dwell;
That soon my thoughts remembered hours will love;
That soon my song of vain regrets will tell.

Then, in romantic moments, I will frame,
Some scene ideal, where we meet at last;
Where, by my peril, snatched from wreck or
flame,
She smiles reward and talks of all the past.

Now for the lark she flies my wistful lay.

Ah, could the bard some winged warbler be,
Following her form, no longer would he say,
Go, gentle muse, and bid farewell for me.'"

I write from an inn within a mile of
Lady Gwyn's. Another hour and
my fate is decided.

Adieu.

LETTER XXVI.

At length, with a throbbing heart,
I now, for the first time, beheld the
mansion of my revered ancestors—the
present abode of Lady Gwyn. That
unfortunate usurper of my rights was
not denied to me; so I alighted; and
though Stuart wished much to be pre-
sent at the interview, I would not permit
him; but was ushered by the footman
into the sitting-room.

I entered with erect, yet gentle majesty ; while my Tuscan habit, which was soiled and shrivelled by the brook, gave me an air of complicated distress.

I found her ladyship at a table, classifying fossils. She was tall and thin, and bore the remains of beauty ; but I could not discover the family face.

She looked at me with some surprise ; smiled, and begged to know my business.

“ It is a business,” said I, “ of the most vital importance to your ladyship’s honour and repose ; and I lament that an imperious necessity compels me to the invidious task of acquainting you with it. Could any thing add to the painful nature of my feelings, it would be to find that I had wounded your’s.”

“ Your preamble alarms me,” said she. “ Do, pray be explicit.”

“ I must begin,” said I, “ with declaring my perfect conviction of your ignorance, that any person is existing, who has a right to the property which your ladyship at present possesses.”

“ Assuredly such a notion never entered my head,” said she, “ and indeed, were such a claim made, I should consider it as utterly untenable—in fact, impossible.”

“ I regret,” said I, “ that it is undeniable. There are documents extant, and witnesses living, to prove it beyond all refutation.”

Her ladyship, I thought, changed colour, as she said :

“ This is strange ; but I cannot believe it. Who would have the face to set up such a silly claim ?”

“ I am so unfortunate as to have that face,” answered I, in a tone of the most touching humility.

“ You !” she cried with amazement.
“ You !”

“ Pardon me the pain I give you,” said I, “ but such is the fact; and grating as this interview must be to the feelings of both parties, I do assure you, that I have sought it, solely to prevent the more disagreeable process of a law-suit.”

“ You are welcome to twenty law-suits, if you wish them,” cried she, “ but I fancy they will not deprive me of my property.”

“ At least,” said I, “ they may be the means of sullyng the character of your deceased lord.”

“ I defy the whole world,” cried she, “ to affix the slightest imputation on his character.”

“ Surely,” said I, “ you cannot pretend ignorance of the fact, that his lordship had the character of being——I

trust; more from misfortune, than from inherent depravity; for your ladyship well knows that man, frail man, in a moment of temptation, perpetrates atrocities, which his better heart afterwards disowns."

"But his character!" cried she.

"What of his character?"

"Ah!" said I, "your ladyship will not compel me to mention."

"You have advanced too far to retreat," cried she. "I demand an unequivocal explanation. What of his character?"

"Well, since I must speak plain," replied I, "it was that of an—— assassin!"

"Merciful powers!" said she, in a faint voice, and reddening violently. "What does the horrid woman mean?"

"I have at this moment," cried I, "a person ready to make oath, that

your unhappy husband bribed a servant of my father's to murder me, while yet an infant, in cold blood."

" 'Tis a falsehood !" cried she. " I would stake my life on its being a vile, malicious, diabolical falsehood."

" Would it were !" said I, " but oh ! Lady Gwyn, the circumstances, the dreadful circumstances—these cannot be contradicted. It was midnight;—the bones of my noble father had just been deposited in the grave;—when a tall figure, wrapt in a dark cloak, and armed with a dagger, stood before the seneschal. *It was the late Lord Gwyn !*"

" Who are you ?" cried she, starting up quite pale and horror-struck. " In the name of all that is dreadful, who can you be ?"

" Your own niece !" said I, meekly kneeling to receive her blessing—" Lady

Cherubina De Willoughby, the daughter of your ladyship's deceased brother, Lord De Willoughby, and of his much injured wife, the Lady Hysterica Belamour!"

"Never heard of such persons in all my life!" cried she, ringing the bell furiously.

"Pray," said I, "be calm. Act with dignity in this affair. Do not disgrace our family. On my honour, I mean to treat you with kindness. Nay, we must positively be on terms of friendship—I make it a point. After all, what is rank? what are riches? How vapid their charms, compared with the heartfelt joys of truth and virtue! O, Lady Gwyn, O, my respected aunt; I conjure you by our common ties of blood, by your brother, who was my father, spurn the perilous toy, fortune, and retire in time, and with-

out exposing your lost lord, into the peaceful bosom of obscurity!"

"Conduct this wretch out of the house," said her ladyship to the ser-
vant who had entered. "She wants
to extort money from me, I believe."

"A moment more," cried I.
"Where is old Eftsoones? Where is
that worthy character?"


"I know no such person," said she.
"Begone, impostor!"

At the word impostor, I smiled;
drew aside my ringlets with one hand,
and pointed to my inestimable mole
with the other.

"Am I an impostor now?" cried I.
"But learn, unfortunate woman, that I
have a certain parchment too."—

"And a great deal of insolence too,"
said she.

"The resemblance of it, at least,"
cried I, "for I have your ladyship's
portrait."



“ My portrait ! ” said she with a sneer.

“ As sure as your name is Nell Gwyn,” cried I ; “ for Nell Gwyn is written under it ; and let me add, that you would have consulted both your own taste, and the dignity of our house better, had you got it written Eleanor instead of Nell.”

“ You little impertinent reprobate ! ” exclaimed she, feeling the peculiar poignancy of the sarcasm. “ Begone this moment, or I will have you drummed through the village ! ”

I waved my hand in token of high disdain, and vanished.

“ Well,” said Stuart, as I got to the carriage, “ has her ladyship acknowledged your claims ? ”

“ No, truly,” cried I, “ but she has turned me out of my own house—think of that ! ”

“ Then,” said he, springing from the

chaise, "I will try whether I cannot succeed better with her ladyship;" and he went into the house.

I remained in a state of the greatest perturbation till he came back.

"Good news!" cried he. "Her ladyship wishes to see you, and apologize for her rudeness; and I fancy," added he, with a significant nod, "all will go well in a certain affair."

"Yes, yes," said I, nodding in return, "I flatter myself she now finds civility the best of her game."

I then alighted, and her ladyship ran forward to meet me. She pressed my hand, *my-deared* me twice in a breath, told me that Stuart had given her my little history—that it was delicious—elegant—exotic; and concluded with declaring, that I must remain at her house a few days, to talk over the great object of my visit.

Much as I mistrusted this sudden alteration in her conduct, I consented to spend a short time with her, on the principle, that heroines always contrive to get under the same roof with their bitterest enemies.

Stuart appeared quite delighted at my determination, and after another private interview with her ladyship, set off for London, to make further inquiries about Wilkinson. I am, however, resolved not to release that mischievous farmer, till I have secured my title and estate. You see I am grown quite sharp.

Her ladyship and I had then a long conversation, and she fairly confessed the probability that my claims are just, but denied all knowledge of old Eftsoones. I now begin to think rather better of her. She has the sweetest temper in the world, loves literature

and perroquets, scrapes mezzotintos, and spends half her income in buying any thing that is hardly to be had. She led me through her cabinet, which contains the most curious assortment in nature—vases of onyx and sardonx, cameos and intaglios; subjects in sea-horse teeth, by Fiamingo and Benvenuto Cellini; and antique gems in iadestone, mochoa, coral, amber, and Turkish agate.

She has already presented me with several dresses, and she calls me her lovely *protégée*, and the Lady Cherubina,—a sound that makes my very heart leap within me. Nay, she did me the honour of assuring me, that her curiosity to know a real heroine was one motive for her having asked me on this visit; and that she positively considers an hour with me worth all her curiosities put together. What

a delicate compliment! So could I do less, in return, than repeat my assurances, that when I succeed in dispossessing her of the property, she shall never want an asylum in my house.

Adieu.

LETTER XXVII.

THINK of its having never once struck me, till I had retired for the night, that I might be murdered! How so manifest a danger escaped my recollection, is inconceivable; but so it was, I never thought of it. Lady Gwyn might be (for any thing I could tell to the contrary) just as capable of plotting an assassination as the Marchesa di Vivaldi; and surely her motives were far more urgent.

I therefore searched in my chamber,

for some trap-door, or sliding pannel, by which assassins might enter it; but I could find none. I then resolved on exploring the galleries, corridors, and suites of apartments, in this immense mansion; in hopes to discover some place of retreat, or at least some mystery relative to my birth.

Accordingly, at the celebrated hour of midnight, I took up the taper, and unbolting my door, stole softly along the lobby.

I stopped before one of our family pictures. It was of a lady, pale, pensive, and interesting; and whose eyes, which appeared to look at me, were sky-blue, like my own. That was sufficient.

“Gentle image of my departed mother!” ejaculated I, kneeling before it, “may thy sacred ashes repose in peace!”

I then faintly chaunted a fragment of a hymn, and advanced. No sigh met my listening ear, no moan amidst the pauses of the gust.

With a trembling hand I opened a door, and found myself in a spacious chamber. It was magnificently furnished, and a piano stood in one corner of it. Intending to run my fingers over the keys, I walked forward; till a low rustling in that direction made me pause. But how shall I paint to you my horror, my dismay, when I heard the mysterious instrument on a sudden begin to sound; not loudly, but (more terrible still!) with a hurried murmur; as if all its chords were agitated at once, by the hand of some invisible demon.

I did not faint, I did not shriek; but I stood transfixed to the spot. The music ceased. I recovered courage

and advanced. The music began again; and again I paused.

What! should I not lift the simple lid of a mere piano, after Emily's having drawn aside the mysterious veil, and discovered the terrific wax-doll underneath it?

Emulation, enthusiasm, curiosity prompted me, and I rushed undaunted to the piano. Louder and more rapid grew the notes—my desperate hand raised the cover, and beneath it, I beheld a sight to me the most hideous and fearful upon earth,—a mouse!

I screamed and dropped the candle, which was instantly extinguished. The mouse ran by me; I flew towards the door, but missed it, and fell against a table; nor was it till after I had made much clamour, that I got out of the room. As I groped my way through the corridor, I heard voices and people

in confusion above stairs; and presently lights appeared. The whole house was in a tumult.

"They are coming to murder me at last!" cried I, as I regained my chamber, and began heaping chairs and tables against the door. Presently several persons arrived at it, and called my name. I said not a word. They called louder, but still I was silent; till at length they burst open the door, and Lady Gwyn, with some of her domestics, entered. They found me kneeling in an attitude of supplication.

"Spare, oh, spare me!" cried I.

"My dear," said her ladyship, "no harm shall happen you."

"Alas, then," exclaimed I, "what portends this nocturnal visit? this assault on my chamber? all these dreadful faces? Was it not enough, unhappy woman, that thy husband

attempted my life, but must thou, too, thirst for my blood?"

Lady Gwyn whispered a servant, who left the room; the rest raised, and put me to bed; while I read her ladyship such a lecture on murder, as absolutely astonished her.

The servant soon after returned with a cup.

"Here, my love," said her ladyship, "is a composing draught for you. Drink it, and you will be quite well to-morrow."

I took it with gladness, for I felt my brain strangely bewildered by the terror that I had just undergone. Indeed I have sometimes experienced the same sensation before, and it is extremely disagreeable.

They then left a candle in my room, and departed.

My mind still remains uneasy; but

I have barricaded the door, and am determined on not undressing. I believe, however, I must now throw myself on the bed; for the draught has made me sleepy.

Adieu.

LETTER XXVIII.

O BIDDY GRIMES, I am poisoned! That fatal draught last night—why did I drink it?—I am in dreadful agony. When this reaches you, all will be over.—But I would not die without letting you know.

Farewell for ever, my poor Biddy!
I bequeath you all my ornaments.

LETTER XXIX.

Yes, my friend, you may well stare at receiving another letter from me; and at hearing that I have not been poisoned in the least!

I must unfold the mystery. When I woke this morning, after my nocturnal perambulation, I found my limbs so stiff, and such pains in all my bones, that I was almost unable to move. Judge of my horror and despair; for it instantly flashed across my mind, that Lady Gwyn had poisoned me! My whole frame underwent a sudden revulsion; I grew sick, and rang the bell with violence; nor ceased an instant, till half the servants, and Lady Gwyn herself, had burst into my chamber.

"If you have a remnant of mercy left," cried I, "send for a doctor!"

"What is the matter, my dear," said her ladyship.

"Only that you have poisoned me, my dear," cried I. "Dear, indeed! I presume your ladyship imagines, that the liberty you have taken with my life, authorizes all other freedoms. Oh, what will become of me!"

"Do, tell me," said she, "how are you unwell?"

"I am sick to death," cried I. "I have pains in all my limbs, and I shall be a corpse in half an hour. Oh, indeed, you have done the business completely. Lady Eleanor Gwyn, I do here, on my death-bed, and with all my senses about me, accuse you, before your domestics, of having administered a deadly potion to me last night."

"Go for the physician," said her ladyship to a servant.

"Well may you feel alarmed," cried I, "your life will pay the forfeit of mine."

"But you need not feel alarmed," said her ladyship, "for really, what I gave you last night, was merely to make you sleep."

"Yes," cried I, "the sleep of the grave! O Lady Gwyn, what have I done to you, to deserve death at your hands? And in such a manner too! Had you even shewn so much regard to custom and common decency, as to have offered me the potion in a bowl or a goblet, there might have been some little palliation. But to add insult to injury;—to trick me out of my life with a paltry tea-cup;—to poison a girl of my pretensions, as vulgarly as you would a rat;—no, no, Madam, this is not to be pardoned!"

Her ladyship again began assuring me that I had taken nothing more than a soporific; but I would not hear her, and at length, I sent her and the domestics out of the chamber, that I might prepare for my approaching end.

How to prepare was the question; for I had never thought of death seriously, heroines so seldom die. Should I follow the beautiful precedent of the dying Heloise, who called her friends about her, got her chamber sprinkled with flowers and perfumes, and then gave up the ghost, in a state of elegant inebriation with home-made wine, which she passed for Spanish? Alas! I had no friends — not even Stuart, at hand; flowers and perfumes I would not condescend to beg from my murderess; and as for wine, I could not abide the thoughts of it in a morning.

But amidst these reflections, a more serious and less agreeable subject intruded itself upon me,—the thoughts of a future state. I strove to banish it, but it would not be repulsed. Yet surely, said I, as a heroine, I am a pattern of perfect virtue; and therefore, I must be happy hereafter. But was virtue sufficient? At church (seldom as I had frequented it, in consequence of its sober ceremonies, so unsuited to my taste,) I remembered to have heard a very different doctrine. There I had heard, that we cannot learn to do right without the Divine aid, and that to propitiate it, we must make ourselves acquainted with those principles of religion, which enable us to prefer dutious prayers, and to place implicit reliance on the power and goodness of the Deity. Alas, I knew nothing of religion, except from novels; and in

these, though the devotion of heroines is sentimental and graceful to a degree, it never influences their acts, or appears connected with their moral duties. It is so speculative and generalized, that it would answer the Greek or the Persian church, as well as the christian; and none but the picturesque and enthusiastic part is presented; such as kissing a cross, chanting a vesper with elevated eyes, or composing a well-worded prayer.

The more I thought, the more horrible appeared my situation. I felt a confused idea, that I had led a worthless, if not a criminal life; that I had left myself without a friend in this world, and had not sought to make one in the next. I became more and more agitated. I tried to turn my thoughts back to the plan of expiring with grace, but all in vain. I then wrote the note

to you; then endeavoured to pray: nothing could calm or divert my mind. The pains grew worse, I felt sick at heart, my palate was parched, and I now expected that every breath would be my last: My soul recoiled from the thought, and my brain became a confused chaos. Hideous visions of eternity rushed into my mind; I lay shivering, groaning, and abandoned to the most deplorable despair.

In this state the physician found me. O what a joyful relief, when he declared, that my disorder was nothing but a violent rheumatism, contracted, it seems, by my fall into the water the morning before! Never was transport equal to mine; and I assured him that he should have a place in my memoirs.

He prescribed for me; but remarked, that I might remain ill a whole month, or be quite well in a few days.

"Positively," said her ladyship, "you must be quite well in four; for then my ball comes on; and I mean to make you the most conspicuous figure at it. I have great plans for you, I assure you."

I thanked her ladyship, and begged pardon for having been so giddy as to call her a murderess; while she laughed at my mistake, and made quite light of it. Noble woman! But I dare say magnanimity is our family virtue.

No sooner had I ceased to be miserable about leaving the world, than I became almost as much so about losing the ball. To lose it from any cause whatever, was sufficiently provoking; but to lose it by so gross a disorder as a rheumatism, was, indeed, dreadful. Now, had I even some pale, genteel, sofa-reclining ill-

ness, curable by hartshorn, I would bless my kind stars, and drink that nauseous cordial, from morning even unto night. For disguise thyself as thou wilt, hartshorn, still thou art a bitter draught; and though heroines in all novels have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account.

Being on this subject, I have to lament, that I am utterly unacquainted with those refined ailments, which every girl that I read of, meets with, as things of course. The consequence is my wanting that beauty, which, touched with the languid delicacy of illness, gains from sentiment what it loses in bloom; so that really this horse's constitution of mine is a terrible disadvantage to me. I know, had I the power of inventing my own indispositions, I would strike out some-

thing far beyond even the hecatics and head-aches of my fair predecessors. I believe there is not a sigh-fever; but I would fall ill of a scald from a lover's tear, or 'a classic scratch from the thorn of a rose.

Adieu.

LETTER XXX.

THIS morning I awoke almost free from pain; and towards evening, I was able to appear in the drawing-room. Lady Gwyn had asked several of her friends to tea, so that I passed a delightful afternoon; the charm, admiration, and astonishment of all.

On retiring for the night to my chamber, I found this note on my toilette, and read it with a beating heart.

To the Lady Cherubina.

"YOUR MOTHER LIVES! and is confined in one of the subterranean vaults belonging to the villa. At midnight you will hear a tapping at your door. Open it, and two men in masks will appear outside. They will blindfold, and conduct you to her. You will know her by her striking likeness to her picture in the gallery. Be silent, courageous, and circumspect.

"AN UNKNOWN FRIEND."

What a flood of new feelings gushed upon my soul, as I laid down the billet, and lifted my filial eyes to heaven! I was about to behold my mother. Mother—endearing name! I pictured to myself, that unfortunate lady, stretched on a mattress of straw, her

eyes sunken in their sockets, yet still retaining a portion of their wonted fire ; her frame emaciated, her voice feeble, her hand damp and chill. Fondly did I depict our meeting—our embrace ; she gently pushing me from her, to gaze on all the lineaments of my countenance, and then baring my temple to search for the mole. All, all is convincing ; and she calls me the softened image of my noble father !

Two tedious hours I waited in extreme anxiety, till at length the clock struck twelve. My heart beat responsive, and in a few moments after, I heard the promised signal at my door. I unbolted it, and beheld two men in masks and cloaks. They blindfolded me, and each taking an arm, led me along. Not a word passed. We traversed several suites of apartments, ascended flights of stairs, descended others ; now

went this way, now that ; obliquely, circularly, angularly ; till I began actually to imagine we were all the time in one spot.

At length my conductors stopped.

“Unlock the postern gate,” whispered one, “while I light a torch.”

“We are betrayed !” said the other, “for this is the wrong key.”

“Then thou beest the traitor,” cried the first.

“Thou liest, dost lie, and art lying !” cried the second.

“Take that !” exclaimed the first. A groan followed, and the wretch dropped to the ground.

“You have murdered him !” cried I, sickening with horror.

“I have only hamstrung him, my lady,” said the fellow. “He will be lame for life.”

"Treason!" shouted the wounded man.

His companion burst open the gate; a sudden current of wind met us, and we fled along with incredible speed, while low moans and smothered shrieks were heard at either side of us.

"Gracious heaven, where are we?" cried I.

"In the cavern of death!" said my conductor, "famous for rats and banditti."

On a sudden innumerable footsteps echoed behind us. We ran swifter.

"Fire!" cried a ferocious accent, almost at my ear; and in a moment several pistols were discharged.

I stopped, unable to move, breathe, or speak.

"I am wounded all over, right and left, fore and aft!" cried my conductor.

"Am I bleeding?" said I, feeling myself with my hands.

"No, blessed St. Anthony be praised!" answered he; "and now all is safe, for we are at the cell, and the banditti have turned into the wrong passage."

He stopped, and unlocked a door.

"Enter," said he, "and behold your unhappy mother!"

He led me forward, took the bandage from my eyes, and retiring, locked the door upon me.

Agitated already by the terrors of my dangerous expedition, I felt additional horror on finding myself in a dismal cell, lighted with a lantern; where, at a small table, sat a woman suffering under a corpulency unparalleled in the memoirs of human monsters. She was clad in sackcloth, her head was swathed in linen, and had grey locks

on it, like horses' tails. Hundreds of frogs were leaping about the floor ; a piece of mouldy bread, a mug of water, and a manuscript, lay on the table ; some straw, strewn with dead snakes and skulls, occupied one corner, and the farther side of the cell was concealed behind a black curtain.

I stood at the door, doubtful, and afraid to advance ; while the prodigious prisoner set examining me from head to foot.

At last I summoned courage to say, " I fear, Madam, I am an intruder here. I have certainly been shewn into the wrong room."

" It is, it is my own, my only daughter, my Cherubina !" cried she, with a tremendous voice. " Come to my maternal arms, thou living picture of the departed Theodore !"

" Why, Ma'am," said I, " I would

with great pleasure, but I am afraid that — Oh, Madam, indeed, indeed, I am quite sure you cannot be my mother !”

“ For shame !” cried she. “ Why not ?”

“ Why, Madam,” answered I, “ my mother was of a thin habit ; as her picture proves.”

“ And so was I once,” said she. “ This deplorable plumpness is owing to want of exercise. You see, however, that I retain all my former paleness.”

“ Pardon me,” said I, “ for I must say that your face is a rich scarlet.”

“ And is this our tender meeting ?” cried she. “ After ten years’ imprisonment, to be disowned by my daughter, and taunted with sarcastic insinuations against my face ? Here is a

pretty joke ! Tell me, girl, will you embrace me, or will you not ?”

“ Indeed, Madam,” answered I, “ I will embrace you presently.”

“ Presently !” cried she.

“ Yes,” said I, “ depend upon it I will. Only let me get over the first shock.”

“ Shock !” vociferated she.

Dreading her violence, and feeling myself bound to do the duties of a daughter, I kneeled at her feet, and said :

“ Ever excellent, ever exalted author of my being, I beg thy maternal blessing !”

My mother raised me from the ground, and hugged me to her heart, with such cruel vigour, that almost crushed, I cried out stoutly, and struggled for release.

“ And now,” said she, relaxing her

grasp, "let us talk over our wrongs. This manuscript is a faithful narrative of my life, previous to my marriage. It was written by my female confidant, to divert her grief, during the long and alarming illness of her Dutch pug. Take it to your chamber, and blot it with your tears, my love."

I put the scroll in my bosom.

"Need I shock your gentle feelings," continued she, "by relating my subsequent story? Suffice it, that as soon as you were stolen, I went mad about the woods, till I was caught; and on recovering my senses, I found myself in this infernal dungeon. Look at that calendar of small sticks, notched all over with my dismal days and nights. Ten long years I have eaten nothing but bread. Oh, ye favourite pullets, oh ye inimitable apple-pies, shall I never, never, taste

you more? Oft too, my reason wanders. Oft I see figures that rise like furies, to torment me. I see them when asleep; I see them now—now!”

She sat in a fixed attitude of horror, while her straining eyes moved slowly round, as if they followed something. I stood shuddering, and hating her more and more every moment.

“Gentle companion of my confinement!” cried she, apostrophizing a huge toad that she pulled out of her bosom; “dear, spotted fondling; thou, next to my Cherubina, art worthy of my love. Embrace each other, my friends.” And she put the hideous pet into my hand. I screamed and dropped it.

“Oh!” cried I, in a passion of despair, “what madness possessed me to undertake this execrable enter-

prize!" and I began beating with my hand against the door.

"Do you want to leave your poor mother?" said she, in a whimpering tone.

"Oh! I am so frightened!" said I.

"You will spend the night here, however," cried she; "and probably your whole life too; for no doubt the ruffian who brought you hither was employed by Lady Gwyn to entrap you."

When I heard this terrible suggestion, my blood ran cold, and I began crying bitterly.

"Come, my love!" said my mother, "and let me lull thee to repose on my soft bosom. What is the world to us? Here in each other's society, we will enjoy all that affection, all that virtue can confer. Come, my daugh-

ter, and let me clasp thee to my heart once more !”

“ Ah,” cried I, “ spare me !”

“ What !” exclaimed she, “ do you spurn my proffered embrace ?”

“ Dear, no, Madam,” answered I.

“ But—but you squeeze one so !”

My mother made a huge stride towards me ; then stood groaning and rolling her eyes.

“ Help !” cried I, half frantic ; “ help ! help !”

I was stopped by a suppressed titter of infernal laughter, as if from many demons ; and on looking towards the black curtain, whence the sound came, I saw it agitated ; and about twenty terrific faces appeared peeping through slits in it, and making grins of a most diabolical nature. I hid my face in my hands.

“ 'Tis the banditti !” cried my mother.

As she spoke, the door opened, a bandage was flung over my eyes, and I was hurried off, almost senseless, in some one's arms ; till at length, I found myself alone in my own chamber.

Such was the detestable adventure of to-night. Oh, Biddy, that I should have lived to meet this mother of mine ! How different from the mothers that other heroines contrive to rummage out in northern turrets and ruined chapels ! I am out of all patience. Liberate her I will, of course, and make a suitable provision for her, when I get possession of my property, but positively, never will I sleep under the same roof with — (ye powers of filial love forgive me !) such a living mountain of human horror.

Adieu.

LETTER XXXI.

WHILE her ladyship is busied in preparing for the ball of to-morrow night, I find time to copy my mother's memoirs for your perusal. Were she herself elegant and interesting, perhaps I might think them so too; and if I dislike them, it must be because I dislike her; for the plot, sentiment, diction, and pictures of nature, differ little from what we find in other novels.

Il Castello di Grimgothico,

OR

MEMOIRS

OF

LADY HYSTERICA BELAMOUR.

A NOVEL.

By Anna Maria Marianne Matilda Pottingen,

*Author of the Bloody Bodkin, Sonnets on most of the Planets,
&c. &c. &c.*

Oh, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, oh!

THOMPSON.

VOL. II.

I

CHAPTER I.

Blow, blow, thou wintry wind.

SHAKESPEARE.

Blow, breezes, blow.

MOORE.

**A STORM.—A RUSTIC REPAST.—AN ALARM.—
UNCOMMON READINESS IN A CHILD.—AN IN-
UNDATED STRANGER.—A CASTLE OUT OF RE-
PAIR.—AN IMPAIRED CHARACTER.**

It was on a nocturnal night in autumnal October; the wet rain fell in liquid quantities, and the thunder rolled in an awful and Ossianly manner. The lowly, but peaceful inhabitants of a small, but decent cottage, were just sitting down to their homely, but wholesome supper, when a loud knocking at the door alarmed them. Bertram armed himself with a ladle.

“Lackadaisy!” cried old Margueritone, and little Billy seized the favourable moment to fill his mouth with meat. Innocent fraud! happy childhood!

“The father’s lustre and the mother’s bloom.”

THOMPSON.

Bertram then opened the door; when lo! pale, breathless, dripping, and with a look that would have shocked the Humane Society, a beautiful female tottered into the room.

“Lackadaisy, Ma’am,” said Margueritone, “are you wet?”

“Wet!” exclaimed the fair unknown, wringing a rivulet of rain from the corner of her robe; “O ye gods, wet!”

Margueritone felt the justice, the gentleness of the reproof, and turned the subject, by recommending a glass of spirits.

“Spirit of my sainted sire.”

The stranger sipped, shook her head, and fainted. Her hair was long and dark, and the bed was ready ; so since she seems in distress, we will leave her there awhile ; lest we should betray an ignorance of the world, in appearing not to know the proper time for deserting people.

On the rocky summit of a beetling precipice, whose base was lashed by the angry Atlantic, stood a moated, and turreted structure, called Il Castello di Grimgothico.

As the northern tower had remained uninhabited since the death of its late lord, Henriques De Violenci, lights and figures were, *par consequence*, observed in it at midnight. Besides, the black eyebrows of the present baron had a habit of meeting for several years, and *quelquefois*, he paced the picture-gallery with a hurried step.

These circumstances combined, there could be no doubt of his having committed murder. Accordingly, all avoided him, except the Count Stiletto, and the hectic, but heavenly Hysterica. The former, he knew, was the most pale-faced, flagitious character in the world. But birds of a plume associate. The latter shall be presented to the reader in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh!"

MILTON.

"Ah!"

POPE.

A HISTORY.—A MYSTERY.—AN ORIGINAL
REFLECTION ON DEATH.—THE HEROINE DE-
SCRIBED.—THE LANDSCAPE NOT DESCRIBED.—AN AWFUL REASON GIVEN.

ONE evening, the Baroness De Violenci, having sprained her left leg in the composition of an ecstatic ode, resolved not to go to Lady Penthesilea Rouge's rout. While she was sitting alone, at a plate of prawns, the footman entered with a basket, which had just been left for her.

"Lay it down, John," said she, touching his forehead with her fork.

That gay-hearted young fellow did as he was desired, and capered out of the room.

Judge of her astonishment, when she found, on opening it, a little cherub of a baby sleeping within.

An oaken cross, with "HYSTERICA," inscribed in chalk, was appended at its neck, and a mark, like a bruised gooseberry, added interest to its elbow.

As she and her lord never had children (at least she could answer for herself), she determined, *sur le champ*, on adopting the pretty Hysterica.

Fifteen years did this worthy woman dedicate to the progress of her little charge ; and in that time, taught her every mortal accomplishment. Her sigh, particularly, was esteemed the softest in Europe.

But the stroke of death is inevitable ;

come it must at last, and neither virtue nor wisdom can avoid it. In a word, the good old Baroness, died, and our heroine fell senseless on her body.

“ O what a fall was there, my countrymen ! ”

But it is now time to describe our heroine. As Milton tells us, that Eve was “ *more lovely than Pandora* ” (an imaginary lady, who never existed but in the brains of poets), so do we declare, and are ready to stake our lives, that our heroine excelled in her form the Timinitilidi, whom no man ever saw ; and, in her voice, the music of the spheres, which no man ever heard. Perhaps her face was not perfect ; but it was more—it was interesting—it was oval. Her eyes were of the real, original old blue ; and her eyelashes of the best silk. You forget the thick-

ness of her lips, in the casket of pearls which they enshrined; and the roses of York and Lancaster were united in her cheek. A nose of the Grecian order surmounted the whole. Such was Hysterica.

But alas! misfortunes are often gregarious, like sheep. For one night, when our heroine had repaired to the chapel, intending to drop her customary tear on the tomb of her sainted benefactress, she heard on a sudden,

“Oh, horrid, horrible, and horriest horror!”

the distant organ peal a solemn voluntary. While she was preparing, in much terror and astonishment, to accompany it with her voice, four men in masks rushed from among some tombs, and bore her to a carriage, which instantly drove off with the whole party. In vain she sought to soften them

by swoons, tears, and a simple little ballad: they sat counting murders, and not minding her.

As the blinds of the carriage were closed the whole way, we have a description of the country which they traversed. Besides, the prospect within the carriage will occupy the reader enough; for in one of the villains, Hysterica discovered—Count Stiletto! She fainted.

On the second day, the carriage stopped at an old castle, and she was conveyed into a tapestried apartment, where the delicate creature instantly fell ill of an inverted eyelash, caused by continual weeping. She then drew upon the contemplation of future sorrows, for a supply of that melancholy which her immediate exigencies demanded.

CHAPTER III.

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd?

SHAKESPEARE.

FRESH EMBARRASSEMENTS.—AN INSULT FROM A
SPECTRE.—GRAND DISCOVERIES.—A SHRIEK.
—A TEAR.—A SIGH.—A BLUSH.—A SWOON.

It is a remark founded upon the nature of man, and universally credited by the thinking part of the world, that to suffer is an attribute of mortality.

Impressed with a due conviction of this important precept, our heroine but smiled as she heard Stiletto lock her door. It was now midnight, and she took up her lamp to examine the chamber. Rusty daggers, mouldering bones, and ragged palls, lay scattered in all the profusion of feudal plenty.

Several horrors now made their appearance; but the most uncommon was a winged eyeball that fluttered before her face.

“ Say, little, foolish, fluttering thing?”

She began shrieking and adjusting her hair at a mirror, when lo! she beheld the reflection of a ghastly visage peeping over her shoulder! Much disconcerted, the trembling girl approached the bed. An impertinent apparition, with a peculiar nose, stood there, and made faces at her. She felt offended at the freedom, to say nothing of her being half dead with fright.

“ Is it not enough,” thought she, “ to be harassed by beings of this world, but those of the next too must think proper to interfere? I am sure,” said she, as she raised her voice in a taunting manner, “ *En vérité*, I have

no desire to meddle with *their* affairs. *Sur ma vie*, I have no taste for brimstone. So let me just advise a *certain* inhabitant of a *certain* world (not the *best*, I believe,) to think less of *my* concerns, and more of *his own*.

Having thus asserted her dignity, without being too personal, she walked to the casement in tears, and sang these simple lines, which she graced with intermittent sobs.

SONG.

Alas, well-a-day, woe to me,
Singing willow, willow, willow ;
My lover is far, far at sea,
On a billow, billow, billow.
Ah, Theodore, would thou could'st be,
On my pillow, pillow, pillow !

Here she heaved a deep sigh, when, to her utter astonishment, a voice, as

if from a chamber underneath ; took up the tune with these words :

SONG.

Alas, well-a-day, woe to me,
Singing sorrow, sorrow, sorrow ;
A ducat would soon make me free,
Could I borrow, borrow, borrow ;
And then I would pillow with thee,
To-morrow, morrow, morrow !

Was it?—It was!—Yes, it *was* the voice of her love, her life, her long-lost Theodore De Willoughby!!! How should she reach him? Forty times she ran round and round her chamber, with agitated eyes and distracted tresses.

Here we must pause a moment, and express our surprise at the negligence of the sylphs and sylphids, in permitting the ringlets of heroines to be so frequently dishevelled. O ye fat-cheeked little cherubims, who flap

your innocent wings, and fly through oceans of air in a minute, without having a hair of your heads discomposed,—no wonder that such stiff ringlets should be made of gold!

At length Hysterica found a sliding pannel. She likewise found a moth-eaten parchment, which she sat down to peruse. But, gentle reader, imagine her emotions, on decyphering these wonderful words.

MANUSCRIPT.

—— Six tedious years ——
 and all for what? ——
 —— No sun, no moon. ——
 Murd —— Adul —— be-
 cause I am the wife of Lord Belamour.
 —— then tore me from him, and
 my little Hysterica ——
 —— Cruel Stiletto! ——
 He confesses that he put the sleeping

babe into a basket ——— sent her
 to the Baroness de Violenci ———
 oaken cross ——— Chalk ———
 bruised gooseberry ———
 ——— I am poisoned ——— a
 great pain across my back ——— i
 ——— j ——— k ——— Oh ! ——— Ah !
 ——— Oh ! ——— ——— ———

Fascinante Peggina Belamour.

This then was the mother of our heroine ; and the M. S. elucidated, beyond dispute, the mysteries which had hitherto hung over the birth of that unfortunate orphan.

We need not add that she fainted, recovered, passed through the pannel, discovered the dungeon of her Theodore ; and having asked him how he did,

“ Comment vous portez vous ? ”
 fell into unsophisticated hysterics.

CHAPTER IV.

Sure such a pair were never seen,
So justly formed to meet by nature,

SHERIDAN.

A TENDER DIALOGUE.—AN INTERESTING
FLIGHT.—A MISCHIEVOUS CLOUD.—OUR
HERO HITS UPON A SINGULAR EXPEDIENT.—
FAILS.—TAKES A TRIP TO THE METROPOLIS.

“And is this you?” cried the delighted youth, as she revived.

“Indeed, indeed it is,” said she.

“Are you quite, quite sure?” cried he.

“Indeed, indeed I am,” said she.

“Well, how do you do?” cried he.

“Pretty well I thank you,” said she.

They then separated, after fixing to meet again.

One night, as they were indulging

each other in innocent endearments, and filling up each finer pause with lemonade, a sudden thought struck Lord Theodore.

“ Let us escape,” said he.

“ Let us,” said she.

“ Gods, what a thought was there !”

They then contrived this ingenious mode of accomplishing their object. In one of the galleries which lay between their chambers, there was a window. Having opened it, they found that they had nothing to do but get out at it. They therefore fled into the neighbouring forest.

“ Happy, happy, happy pair !”

DRYDEN.

But it is an incontrovertible truism, that *les genres humains* are liable to disaster ; for in consequence of a cloud that obscured the moon, Hysterica fell into a snow-pit. What could

Theodore do ! To save her was impossible ; to perish with her would be suicide. In this emergency, he formed a bold project, and ran two miles for assistance. But alas ! on his return, not a trace of her could be found. He was quite *au desespoir* ; so, having called her long enough, he called a chaise, and set off for London.

CHAPTER V.

'Tis she!

POPE.

O Vous!"

TELEMACHUS.

All hail!

MACBETH.

**AN EXTRAORDINARY RENCONTRE—PATHEtic
REPARTES.—NATURAL CONSEQUENCES RE-
SULTING FROM AN EXCESS IN SPIRITUOUS LI-
QUORS.—TERRIFIC NONSENSE TALKED BY TWO
MANIACS.**

ONE night as Lord Theodore, on his return from the theatre, was passing along a dark alley, he perceived a candle lighting in a small window, on the ground-floor of a deceduous hovel.

An indescribable sensation, an unaccountable something, whispered to him, in still, small accents, "peep through the pane." He did so; but what were his emotions, when he be-

held—whom? Why the very young lady that he had left for dead in the forest—his Hysterica!!!

She was clearstarching in a dimity bedgown.

He sleeked his eyebrows with his finger, then flung open the sash, and stood before her.

“*Ah, ma belle Amie!*” cried he. “So I have caught you at last. I really thought you were dead.”

“I am dead to love and to hope!” said she.

“O ye powers!” cried he, making a blow at his forehead.

“There are many kinds of powers,” said she carelessly: “perhaps you now mean the powers of impudence, Mr.—I beg pardon—Lord Theodore De Willoughby, I believe.”

“I believe so,” retorted he,—“Mrs.—or rather Lady Hys—Hys—Hys.”—

“Hiss away, my lord!” exclaimed the sensitive girl, and fainted.

Lord Theodore rushed at a bottle that stood on the dresser, and poured half a pint of it into her mouth; but perceiving by the colour that it was not water, he put it to his lips;—it was brandy. In a paroxysm of despair he swallowed the contents; and at the same moment Hysterica woke from her fainting-fit, in a high delirium.

“What have you done to me?” stammered she. “Oh! I am lost.” “What!” exclaimed the youth, who had also got a brain-fever; “after my preserving you in brandy?” “I am happy to hear it,” lisped she; “and every thing round me seems to be happy, for every thing round me seems to be dancing!”

Both now began singing, with dreadful facetiousness; he, “fill the bowl,” and she, “drink to me only.”

At length they sang themselves asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

Take him for all in all,
We ne'er shall look upon his like again.

SHAKESPEARE.

BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION OF OUR
HERO.—AN ASPIRING PORTER.—ECLAIRCIS-
SEMENT.

LORD Theodore De Willoughby was the son of Lord De Willoughby, of De Willoughby Castle. After having graduated at Oxford, he took, not alone a tour of the Orkney Islands, but an opportunity of saving our heroine's life. Hence their mutual attachment. About the same time, Count Stiletto had conceived a design against that poor orphan; and dreading Lord Theodore as a rival, waylaid and imprisoned him.

But to return.

Next morning, the lovers woke in full possession of their faculties, when the happiest *denouement* took place. Hysterica told Theodore that she had extricated herself from the snow, at the risk of her life. In fact, she was obliged to pelt it away in balls, and Theodore now recollected having been hit with one, during his search for her. Fearful of returning to the castle, she walked *à Londres*; and officiated there in the respective capacities of cook, milliner, own woman, and washerwoman. Her honour too, was untarnished, though a hulking porter had paid her the most delicate attentions, and assured her that Theodore was married to cruel Barbara Allen.

Theodore called down several stars to witness his unalterable love; and, as a farther proof of the fact, offered to marry her the next day.

Her former scruples (the mysterious

circumstances of her birth) being now removed, she beamed an inflammatory glance, and consented. He deposited a kiss on her cheek, and a blush was the rosy result. He therefore repeated the application.

CHAPTER VII

Sure such a day as this was never seen !

THOMAS THUMB.

The day, th' important day !

ADDISON.

O giorno felice !

ITALIAN.

RURAL SCENERY.—THE BRIDAL COSTUME.—
OLD FRIENDS. — LITTLE BILLY GREATLY
GROWN.— THE MARRIAGE. — A SCENE OF
MORTALITY.—CONCLUSION.

THE morning of the happy day destined to unite our lovers was ushered into the world with a blue sky, and the ringing of bells. Maidens, united in bonds of amity and artificial roses, come dancing to the pipe and tabor ; while groups of children and chickens

add hilarity to the unison of congenial minds. On the left of the village are seen plantations of tufted turnips; on the right a dilapidated dog-kennel,

“ With venerable grandeur marks the scene ;”

while every where the delighted eye catches monstrous mountains and minute daisies. In a word,

“ All nature wears one universal grin.”

The procession now set forward to the church. The bride was habited in white drapery. Ten signs of the Zodiac, worked in spangles, sparkled round its edge, but Virgo was omitted at her own desire; and the bridegroom proposed to dispense with Capricorn. Sweet delicacy! She held a pot of myrtle in her hand, and wore on her head a small lighted torch, emblematical of Hymen. The boys and girls bounded about her, and old Margueri-

tone begged the favour of lighting her pipe at her la'ship's head.

"Aha, I remember you!" said little Billy, pointing his plump and dimpled finger at her. She remarked how tall he was grown, and took him in her arms; while he playfully beat her with an infinitude of small thumps.

The marriage ceremony passed off with great spirit; and the fond bridegroom, as he pressed her to his heart, felt how pure, how delicious are the joys of virtue.

That evening, he gave a *fête champêtre* to the peasantry; and, afterwards, a magnificent supper to his friends.

The company consisted of Lord Lilliput, Sir James Brobdignag, little Billy, Anacharsis Clootz, and Joe Miller.

Nothing, they thought, could add

to their happiness; but they were miserably mistaken. A messenger, pale as Priam's, rushed into the room, and proclaimed Lord Theodore a peer of Great Britain, as his father had died the night before.

All present congratulated Lord De Willoughby on this prosperous turn of affairs; while himself and his charming bride exchanged a look that spoke volumes.

Little Billy then pledged him in a goblet of Falernian; but he very properly refused, alleging, that as the dear child was in love with Hysterica, he had probably poisoned the wine, in a fit of jealousy. The whole party were in raptures at this mark of his lordship's discretion.

After supper, little Billy rose, and bowing gracefully to the bride, stabbed himself to the heart.

Our readers may now wish to learn what became of the remaining personages in this narrative.

Count Stiletto is dead; Lord Lilliput is no more; Sir James Brobdignag has departed this life; Anacharsis Cloutz is in his grave; and Mr. J. Miller is in another, and we trust, a better world.

Old Margueritone expired with the bible in her hand, and the coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of lunacy.

Having thus conducted our lovers to the summit of human happiness, we shall take leave of our readers with this moral reflection:—

THE FALLING OUT OF LOVERS IS THE RENEWAL
OF LOVE.

THE END.

I must now leave you to prepare my dress for the ball. The ball-room, which occupies an entire wing of the house, is full of artists and workmen; but her ladyship will not permit me to see it till the night of the dance; as, she says, she means to surprise me with its splendour. Cynics may say what they will against expensive decorations; but in my opinion, whatever tends to promote taste in the fine arts (and a mental is in some degree productive of a moral taste); whatever furnishes artizans with employment, and excites their emulation, must improve the condition of society.

Adieu.

LETTER XXXII.

THE morning of the ball, I awoke without any remains of my late indisposition, except that captivating paleness, that sprinkling of lilies, which adds to interest without detracting from beauty.

I rose with the sun, and taking a small china vase in my hand, tripped into the parterre, to collect the fresh and fragrant dew that glistened on the blossoms. I filled the piece of painted earth with the nectar of the sky, and returned.

During the day, I took nothing but honey, milk, and dried conserves; a repast the most likely to promote that ethereal character which I purposed adopting at night.

Towards evening, I laved my limbs

in a tepid bath ; and as soon as the sun had waved his last crimson banner in the west, I began my toilette.

So variable is fashion, that I determined not to dress according to its existing laws ; since they might be completely exploded in a month ; and, at all events, by the time my life is written, they will have become quite antiquated. For instance, do we not already abhor Evelina's and Harriet Byron's powdered, pomatumed, and frizzled hair ? It was, therefore, my plan to dress in imitation of classical models, and to copy the immortal toilette of Greece.

Having first divested myself from head to foot of every habiliment, I took a long piece of the finest cambric, and twice wound it gracefully round my shoulders and bosom, and twice enveloped my form in its folds ; which,

while they delineated the outline of my shape, veiled the tincture of my skin. I then flung over it a drapery of embroidered gauze, and its unimplicated simplicity gave to my perfect figure the spirit of an antique statue. An apparent tissue of woven air, it fell like a vapour round me. A zone of gold and a clasp prettily imprisoned my waist; and my graceful arms, undegraded by gloves, were bare to the shoulder. Part of my hair was confined by a bodkin, and part floated over my neck in native ringlets. As I could not well wear my leg naked, I drew on it a texture of woven silk; and laced a pair of sandals over my little foot; which resembled that of a youthful Thetis, or of a fugitive Atalanta.

I then bathed my face with the dew which I had gathered in the morning,

poured on my hair and bosom the balmy waters of the distilled rose, and sprinkled my drapery with fragrant floods of lavender; so that I might be said to move in an ambient atmosphere of odours.

Behold me now, dressed to a charm, to a criticism. Here was no sloping, or goring, or seaming, or frilling, or flouncing. Detestable mechanism of millinery! No tedious papillotes, or unpoetical pins were here. All was done, in a few minutes, with a clasp, a zone, and a bodkin.

As I surveyed my form in the mirror, I was enraptured at its Sylphic delicacy; but I trembled to reflect, that the fairest flowers are the most fragile. You would imagine that a maiden's sigh could dissipate the drapery; and its ærial effect was as if a fairy were to lift the filmy gossamer on

her spear, and lightly fling it over a rose-bud.

Resolving not to make myself visible till all the guests had arrived, I sat down and read Ossian, to store my mind with ideas for conversation. I love Ossian, it is so sublime, so bewildered, so full of a blue and white melancholy; of ghosts, and the four elements. I likewise turned over other books; for, as I had never mixed in fashionable society, I could not talk that nothingness, which is every thing in high life. Nor, indeed, if I could, would I; because, as a heroine, it was my part to converse with point, flowers, and sublimation.

About to appear in a world where all was new to me; ignorant of its forms, inexperienced in its rules; fair, young, and original, I resolved on adopting such manners as should not be subject

to place, time, accident, or fashion. In short, to copy universal, generalized, unsophisticated nature, and Grecian statues.

As I had studied elegance of attitude before I knew the world, my graces were original, and all my own creation; so that if I had not the temporary mannerisms of a marchioness, I had, at least, the immortal movements of a seraph. Words may become obsolete, but the language of gesture is universal and eternal.

As for smiles, I felt myself perfect mistress of all that were ever ascribed to heroines;—the fatal smile, the smile such as precedes the dissolution of sainted goodness, the fragment of a broken smile, and the sly smile that creates the little dimple on the left side of the little mouth.

At length the most interesting mo-

ment of my life arrived; the moment when I was to burst, like a new planet, on the fashionable hemisphere. I descended the stairs, and pausing at the door, tried to tranquillize my fluttered spirits. I then assumed an air-lifted figure, scarcely touching the ground, and glided into the room.

The company were walking in groups, or sitting.

“That is she;—there she is;—look, look!” was whispered on all sides. Every eye fixed itself upon me, while I felt at once elevated and oppressed.

Lady Gwyn advanced, took my hand, and paying me the highest compliments on my appearance, led me to a sofa, at the upper end of the room. A semicircle of astonished admirers, head over head, ranged itself in my front, and a smile of glowing approbation illumi-

nated the faces of all. There I sat, in all the bashful diffidence of a simple and inexperienced recluse, trembling for myself, fearing for others, systematically suppressing my feelings, impulsively betraying them ; while, with an expression of sweet wildness, and retiring consciousness, was observable a degree of susceptibility too exquisite to admit of lasting peace.

At last a spruce and puny fop stepped from amidst the group, and seated himself beside me.

“ This was a fine day, Ma’am,” said he, as he admired the accurate turn of his ankle.

“ Yes,” answered I, “ halcyon was the morn, when I strayed into the garden, to gather flowery dew ; and it seemed as if the twins of Latona had met to propitiate their rites. Blushes, like their own roses, coloured the va-

pours; and rays, pure as their thoughts, silvered the foliage."

The company murmured applause.

"What a pity," said he, "that this evening was wet; as in consequence of it, we have probably lost another beautiful description from you."

"Ah, my good friend," cried I, wreathing my favourite smile; and laying the rosy tip of my finger on his arm; "such is the state of man. His morning rises in sunshine, and his evening sets in rain."

While the company were again expressing their approbation, I overheard one of them whisper to the fop:

"Come, play the girl off, and let her have your best nonsense."

The fop winked at him, and then turned to me; while I sat shocked and astonished, but collecting all my powers.

"See," said he, "how you have fascinated every eye. Actually you are the queen-bee; with all your swarm about you."

"And with my drone too," said I, bowing slightly.

"Happy in being a drone," said he, "so he but sips of your honey."

"Rather say," cried I, "that he deserves my sting."

"Ah," said he, laying his hand on his heart; "your eyes have fixed a sting here."

"Then your tongue," returned I, "is rather more innocent; for though it may have the venom of a sting, it wants the point."

The company laughed, and he coloured.

"Do I tease you?" said he, trying to rally. "How cruel! Actually I am so abashed, as you may see, that my modesty flies into my face."

"Then," said I, "your modesty must be very hard run for a refuge."

Here the room echoed with acclamations.

"I am not at a loss for an answer," said he, looking round him, and forcing a smile. "I am not indeed."

"Then pray let me have it," said I, "for folly never becomes truly ludicrous till it tries to be pert."

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried an hundred voices at once, and away the little drone flew from my hive. I tossed back my ringlets with an infantine shake of the head, and sat as if unconscious of my triumph.

The best of it is, that every word he said will one day appear in print. Men who converse with a heroine ought to talk for the press, or they will make but a silly figure in her memoirs.

"I thank you for your spirit, my dear," said Lady Gwyn, sitting down

beside me. "That little puppy deserves every severity. Think of his always sitting in his dressing-gown, a full hour after he has shaved, that the blood may subside from his face. He protests his surprise how men can find pleasure in running after a nasty fox; cuts out half his own coat at his tailors; has a smile, and a 'pretty!' for every one and every thing; sits silent till one of his four only topics is introduced, and then lisping a descant on the last opera, the last boxing-match, the last race, or the last play, he drains his last idea, and has nothing at your service, for the remainder of the night, but an assenting bow. Such insects should never come out but at butterfly-season; and even then, only in a four-wheeled bandbox, while monkeys strew the way with mignonette. No, I can never forgive him for having gone to I

tein's last rout in preference to mine ; though he knew that she gave her's on the same evening purposely to thin my party."

" And pray," said I, " who is Lady Bontein ?"

" That tall personage yonder, with sorrel hair," answered her ladyship ; " and with one shoulder of the gothic order, and the other of the corinthian. She has now been forty years endeavouring to look handsome, and she still thinks, that by diligent perseverance she will succeed at last. See how she freshens her smiles, and labours to look at ease ; though she has all the awkwardness of a milkmaid, without any of the simplicity. You must know she has pored over Latin, till her mind has become as dead as the language itself. Then she writes well-bred sonnets about a tear, or a prim-

rose, or a daisy; but nothing larger than a lark; and talks botany with the men, as she thinks that science is a sufficient excuse for indecency. Nay, the meek creature affects the bible too; but it is whispered, that she has often thrown it at her footman's head, without any affectation at all. But the magnificence of to-night will put all competition out of her power; and I have also planned a little *Scena*, classical appropriate, and almost unique; not alone in order to complete my triumph over her, but to grace your entrance into life, by conferring a peculiar mark of distinction on you."

"On me!" cried I. "What mark? I deserve no mark, I am sure."

"Indeed you do," said she. "All the world knows that you are the first heroine in it; and the fact is, I mean

to celebrate your merits to-night, by crowning you, just as Corinne was crowned in the capitol."

"Dear Lady Gwyn," cried I, panting with joy; "sure you are not— Ah, are you serious?"

"Most serious, my love," answered she, "and in a short time the ceremony will commence. You may perceive that the young men and girls have left the room. It is to prepare for the procession; and now excuse me, as I must assist them."

She then hurried out, and I remained half an hour, in an agony of anxious expectation.

At last, I heard a confused murmur at the door, and a gentleman ran forward from it, to clear a passage. A lane was soon formed of the guests; and fancy my feelings, when I beheld the promised procession entering!

First appeared several little children, who came tripping towards me; some with baskets of flowers, and others with vases of odorous waters, or censers of fragrant fire. After them advanced a tall youth of noble port, conspicuous in a scarlet robe, that trailed behind him with graceful dignity. On his head was a plat of palm, in his left hand he held a long wand, and in his right the destined wreath of laurel and myrtle. Behind him came maidens, two by two, and hand in hand. They had each a drapery of white muslin flung negligently round them, and knotted just under the shoulder; while their luxuriant hair floated over their bosoms. The youths came next, habited in flowing vestments of white linen.

The leader approached, and making profound obeisance, took my hand. I

rose, bowed, and we proceeded with a slow step out of the room; while the children ran before us, tossing their little censers, scattering pansies, and sprinkling liquid sweets. The nymphs and youths followed in couples, and the company closed the procession. We crossed the hall, ascended the winding staircase, and passed along the corridor, till we reached the ball-room. The folding doors then flew open, as if with wings; and a scene presented itself, which almost baffles description.

It was a spacious apartment, oval in its form, and walled all round with a luxuriant texture of interwoven foliage, kept compact by green lattice-work. Branches of the broad chesnut and arbutus were relieved with lauristinas, acacias, and mountain-ash; while here and there, within the branches, appeared clusters of lamps, that min-

gled their coloured rays, and poured a flood of lustre on the leaves. The floor was chalked into circular compartments, and each depicted some gentle scene of romance. There I saw Mortimer and his Amanda, Delville and his Cecilia, Valencourt and his Emily. The ceiling was of moss, illuminated with large circles of lamps; and from the centre of each circle, a basket was seen peeping, and half inverted, as if about to shower its ripe fruits and chaplets upon our heads.

At the upper end of the room I beheld a large arbour, elevated on a gradual slope of turf. Its outside was intertwined with jessamines, honeysuckles, and eglantines, tufted with clumps of sunflowers, lilies, hollyhocks, and a thousand other blossoms, and hung with clusters of grapes, and trails of intricate ivy; while all its in-

terior was so studded with innumerable lamps, that it formed a resplendent arch of variegated fire. The seat was a grassy bank, strewn with a profusion of aromatic herbs; and the footstool was a heap of roses. Just from under this footstool, and through the turf, came gushing a little rill, that first tumbled its warbling waters down some rugged stones, and then separating itself to the right and left, ran along a pebbled channel, bordered with flowery banks, till it was lost, at either side, amidst overshadowing branches.

The moment I set foot in the room, a stream of invisible music, as if from above, and softened by distance, came swelling on my enraptured ear. Thrice we circled this enchanted chamber, and trod to the solemn measure. I was amazed, entranced; I felt elevated

to the empyrean. I moved with the grandeur of a goddess, and the grace of a vision.

At length my conductor led me across the little rill, into the bower. I sat down, and he stood beside me. The children lay in groups on the grass, while the youths and virgins ranged themselves along the opposite side of the streamlet, and the rest of the company stood behind them.

The master of this august ceremony now waved his wand: the music ceased, all was silent, and he thus began.

“ My countrymen and countrywomen.

“ Behold your Cherubina; behold the most celebrated woman in our island. Need I recount to you all her accomplishments? Her impassioned sensibility, her exquisite art in depict-

ing the delicate and affecting relations between the beauties of nature, and the deep emotions of the soul? Need I dwell on those elegant adventures, those sorrows, and those horrors, which she has experienced; I might almost say, sought? Oh! no. The whole globe already resounds with them, and their fame will descend to the most remote posterity.

“Need I portray her eloquence, the purity of her style, and the smoothness of her periods? Are not her ancestors illustrious? Are not her manners fascinating? Alas! to this question, some of our hearts beat audible response. Her’s is the head of a Sappho, deficient alone in the voluptuous languor, which should characterize the countenance of that enamoured Lesbian.

“To crown her, therefore, as the patroness of arts, the paragon of

charms, and the first of heroines, is to gratify our feelings, more than her own; by enabling us to pay a just homage to beauty and to virtue."

He ceased amidst thunders of applause. I rose;—and in an instant, it was the stillness of death. Then with a timorous, yet ardent air, I thus addressed the assembly.

"My countrymen, my countrywomen !

"I will not thank you, for I cannot. In giving me cause to be grateful, you have taken from me the means of expressing my gratitude, for you have overpowered me.

"How I happen to deserve the beautiful eulogium just pronounced, I am sure I cannot conceive. Till this flattering moment, I never knew that the grove resounds with my praises, that my style is pure, and my head a

Sappho's. But unconsciousness of merit is the characteristic of a heroine.

“The gratitude, however, which my words cannot express, my deeds shall evince; and I now pledge myself, that neither rank nor riches (which, from my pursuits, I am peculiarly liable to) shall ever make me unmindful of what I owe to adversity. For, from her, I have acquired all my knowledge of the world, my sympathy, my pensiveness, and my sensibility. Yes, since adversity thus adds to virtue, it must be a virtue to seek adversity.

“England, my friends, is now the depository of all that remains of virtue;—the ark that floats upon the waters of the deluge. But what preserves her virtuous? Her women. And whence arises their purity? From education.

“To you, then, my fair auditory, I

would enjoin a diligent cultivation of learning. But oh! beware what books you peruse; for, trust me, some are as injurious as others are salutary. I cannot point out to you the mischievous class, because I have never read them; but indubitably, the most useful are novels and romances. Such as I am, these, these alone have made me. These, by depicting heroines sublimated almost to immateriality, teach the common class of womankind to reach what is uncommon, by striving at what is unattainable; to despise the grovelling follies and idlenesses of the mere worker of samplers, and to contract a taste for that sensibility, whose tear is the dissolution of pearls, whose blush is the sunbeam of the cheek, and whose sigh is more costly than the breeze, that comes laden with oriental frankincense."

I spoke, and peals of acclamation shook the bower.

The priest, of the ceremony now raises the crown on high, then lowers it by slow degrees, and holds it suspended over my head. Letting down my tresses, and folding my hands on my bosom, I throw myself upon my knees, and incline forward to receive it.

I AM CROWNED.

At the same moment, drums, and trumpets, and shouts, burst upon my ear, in a hurricane of triumph. The youths and maidens make obeisance; I rise, press my hand to my heart, and bow deeply. Tears start into my eyes. I feel far above mortality.

Hardly had the tumult subsided when a harp was brought to the bower; and they requested that I would sing and play an improvisatore, like Co-

rinne. What was I to do? for I knew nothing of the harp, but a few chords! In this difficulty, I luckily recollected a heroine, who was educated only by an old steward, and his old wife, in an old castle, with an old lute; and who, notwithstanding, as soon as she stepped into society, played and sang, like angels, by intuition.

I therefore felt quite reassured, and sat to the harp. I struck a few low Lydian notes, and cast a timid glance around me. At first my voice was scarcely louder than a sigh; and my accompaniment was a harmonic chord, swept at intervals. The words came from the moment.

“Where is my blue-eyed chief?
said the white-bosomed daughter of
Erin, as the wave kissed her foot; and
wherefore went he from his weeping
maid, to the fight of heroes? She saw

a dim form rise before her, like a mist from the valley. Pale grew her cheek, as the blighted leaf in autumn. Your lover, it shrilly shrieked, sleeps among the dead, like a broken thistle amidst dandelions; but his spirit, like the thistle down, has ascended into the skies. The maiden heard; she ran, she flew, she sprang from a rock. The waves closed over her. Peace to the daughter of Erin!"

As I sang "she ran, she flew," the workings and tremblings of the minstrel were in unison; while my winged fingers fluttered along the chords, light as a swallow over a little lake, when he touches it with the utmost feather of his pinion. But while I sang, "peace to the daughter of Erin!" my voice, as it died over the faint vibration of the strings, had all the heart-breaking softness of an Eolian lyre; so

woeful was it, so wistful, so wildered. "Viva ! viva !" resounded through the room. At the last cadence, I dropped one arm gently down, and hanging the other on the harp, leaned my languishing head upon it, while my moistened eyes were half closed.

A sudden disturbance at the door roused me from my trance. I looked up, and beheld—what?—Can you imagine what? No, my friend, you could not to the day of judgment. I saw, in short, my great mother come striding towards me, with outspread arms, and calling, " my daughter, my daughter !" in a voice that might waken the dead.

My heart died within me : down I darted from the bower, and ran for shelter behind Lady Gwyn.

" Give me back my daughter !" vociferated the dreadful woman, advancing close to her ladyship.

"Oh! do no such thing!" whispered I, pulling her ladyship by the sleeve.

"Take half—all my property; but do not be the death of me!"

"What are you muttering there, Miss?" cried my mother, espying me.

"What makes you stand peeping over that wretch's shoulder?"

"Indeed, Ma'am," stammered I, "I am—I am taking your part."

"Who could have presumed to liberate this woman?" cried Lady Gwyn.

"The Condottieri," said my mother, "headed by the great Damno Sulphureo Volcanoni."

"Then you must return to your prison, this moment," cried Lady Gwyn.

My mother fell on her knees, and began blubbering; while the guests got round, and interceded for her

being restored to liberty. I too thought it my duty to say something (my mother all the time sobbing horribly); till, at length, Lady Gwyn consented—for my sake, she said,—to set the poor wretch free; but on this special condition, that there should be no prosecution for false imprisonment.

All matters being amicably adjusted, my mother begged a morsel of meat, as she had not eaten any these ten years. In a few minutes, a small table, furnished with a cold turkey and a decanter of wine, was laid for her in the bower. The moment she perceived it, she ran, and seating herself in the scene of my recent triumph, began devouring with such avidity, that I was thunderstruck. One wing soon went; the second shared the fate of its companion, and now she set about a large slice of the breast.

“What a charming appetite your dear mother has got!” said several of the guests to me. I confessed it, but assured them that inordinate hunger did not run in our family. Her appetite being at last satiated, she next assailed the wine. Glass after glass disappeared with inconceivable rapidity, and every glass went to my heart. “She will be quite intoxicated!” thought I; while my fears for the hereditary honour of our house overcoming my personal terrors, I had the resolution to steal across, and whisper:

“Mother, if you have any regard for your daughter, and respect for your ancestors, drink no more.”

“No more than this decanter, upon my honour!” said she, applying it to her lips.

At this moment the violins struck up.

“And now,” cried my mother, run-

ning down from the bower, "who is for a dance?"

"I am," said my friend, the little fop, advancing, and taking her hand.

"Then," said she, "we will waltz, if you please."

Santa Maria!---Waltz!

A circle was cleared, and they began whirling each other round at a frightful rate,---or rather she him; for he was like a plaything in her hands; and had he let go his grasp, I am sure he would have been flung up among the branches, and have stuck there, like King Charles in the oak.

At last, while I was standing, a statue of shame, and wondering how any human being, endowed with a common portion of reason, could act so ridiculous a part, this miserable woman, overcome with wine and waltzing, fell flat upon the floor; and was carried

out of the room by four grinning footmen.

I could hold no longer : the character of my family demanded a prompt explanation, and with tears in my eyes, I desired to be heard. Silence was obtained.

“ I beseech of this assembly,” said I, “ to acquit me of having hand, act, or part, in the conduct of that unfortunate person. I never even saw her, till I came to this house; and that I may never see her again, I pray heaven. I hate her, I dread her; and I now protest, in the most unequivocal manner, that I do not believe her to be my mother at all. She has no resemblance to the portrait in the gallery; and as she was stark mad, when found in the woods, she perhaps imagined herself my mother; for I am told that mad persons are apt to fancy them-

selves great people. No, my malignant star ordained us to meet, that she might place me in awkward situations by her vulgarity ; just as Mrs. Garnet, the supposed mother of the Beggar Girl, used to place that heroine. I am sure this is the case ; nothing can convince me to the contrary ; and therefore, I thus publicly renounce, disown, and wash my hands of her, now and for ever."

The company coincided in my sentiments, and applauded my determination.

Country dancing was then proposed: the men sauntered about the room for partners; the mothers walked their daughters up and down, to shew their paces; and their daughters turned away their heads when they saw their favourites approaching to ask them. Ugliness and diamonds occupied the

top of the set; the beauties stood in the centre, and the motley couples came last; — old bachelors with misses of fifteen; and boys, who were glad to be thought men, with antiques, who were sorry to be called maids. Other unfortunates, drest to a pin, yet noticed by nobody, sat protruding the supercilious lip at a distance.

And now the merry maze commenced. But what mutilated steps, what grotesque graces! One girl sprang and sprawled to the terror of every ankle; and with a clear idea of space, shewed that she had no notion of time. Another, not deigning to dance, only moved; while her poor partner was seen helping her in, like a tired jade to the distance post. This bartered elegance for a flicflac; that swam down the set; a third cut her way through it; and a fourth, who, by her longevity could

not be dancing for a husband, appeared, by her earnestness, to be dancing for her life.

All this delighted me highly, for it would shew my graces to the greater advantage. My partner was the gentleman who had crowned me; and now, when our turn to dance down came, a general whisper among the spectators, and their sudden hurry towards me, proved that much was expected from my performance. I would not disappoint them for worlds; besides, it was incumbent on me to stamp a marked dissimilarity between my supposed mother, and myself, in every thing; and to call forth respect and admiration, as much as she had excited derision and contempt.

And now, with my right foot behind, and the point of it but just touching the ground, I leaned forward

on my left, and stood as if in act to ascend from this vale of tears to regions of interminable beatitude.

The next moment the music gave the signal, and I began. Despising the figure of the common country-dance, I meandered through all the intricacies of the dance of Ariadne; imitating in my circular and oblique motions the harmonious movement of the spheres; and resembling, in my light and playful form, the Horæ of Bathycles, as they appeared in the Temple of Amycla. Sometimes with a rapid flight, and glowing smile, I darted, like a herald Iris, through the mazes of the set; sometimes assuming the dignity of a young Diana, I floated in a swimming languishment; and sometimes, like a pastoral nymph of Languedoc, capriciously did I bend my head on one side, and dance up insidious. What Hebe!

I happened not to see my partner from the time I began till I had ended; but when panting and playful, I flew like a lapwing, to my seat, he followed, and requested that I would accept the assurances of his high admiration.

Soon afterwards, waltzing was introduced.

“You have already imitated Ida’s dancing,” said he. “Will you now imitate Charlotte’s, and allow me, like Werter, to hold in my arms the most lovely of women; to fly with her, like the wind, and lose sight of every other object?”

I consented; he led me forth, and clasping my waist, began the circuitous exercise of waltzing. Round and round we flew, and swifter and swifter; till my head grew quite giddy. Lamps, trees, dresses, faces, all seemed to be

shattered and huddled together, and sent whisking round the room in a vortex.

But, oh, my friend, how shall I find language to describe the calamitous termination of an evening so propitious in its commencement? I blush as I write it, till the reflected crimson dyes my paper. For in the midst of my rotatory motion, while heaven seemed earth, and earth seemed heaven; the zone, on which all my attire depended, and by which it was all confined, on a sudden burst asunder, and in the next whirl, more than half of my dress dropped at my feet! Another revolution and I had acted Diana to fifty Acteons; but I shrieked, and extricating myself from my partner, sank on the floor, amidst the wreck of my drapery. The ladies ran, ranged themselves round me, and cast

a mantle over my half-revealed charms. I was too much shocked, and indeed too giddy to move; so they lifted me between them, and bore me, in slow procession, out of the room. It was the funeral of modesty; but the pall was supported by tittering malice.

I hurried into bed, and cried myself asleep.

I cannot think, much less write of this disaster, with common fortitude. I wonder whether Thompson's Musidora could be considered a sufficient precedent, or at least a palliative parallel? If not, and that my biographer records it, I am undone.

Adieu.

END OF VOL. II.

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